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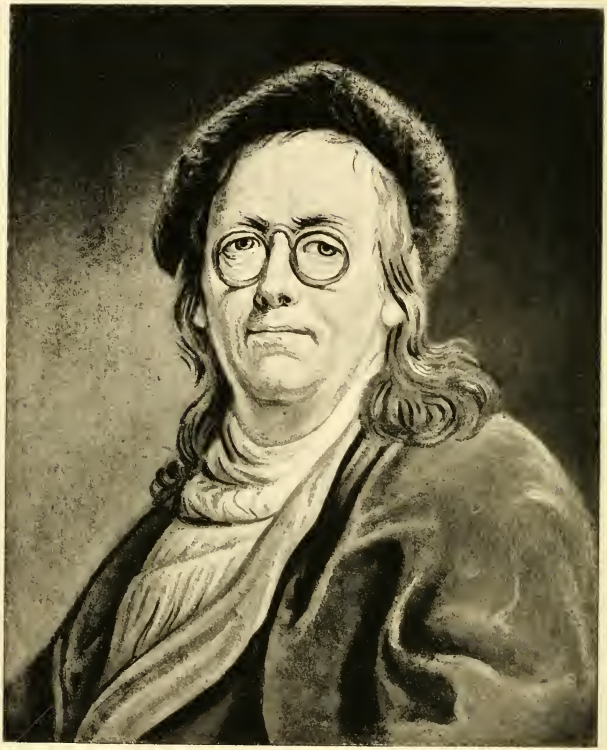

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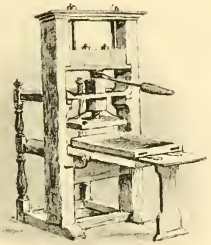

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by

John Bigelow

"Strange that Ulysses does a thousand things so well."—ILIAD, B II, 335

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CORRESPONDENCE

AND

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

CORRESPONDENCE
AND
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

DCCCCLXXXIII

FROM ROBERT MORRIS

PHILADELPHIA, 13 July, 1781.

SIR:—The unanimous appointment to the superintendency of our finances, with which Congress has honored me, and my conviction of the necessity that some *one* person should endeavor to introduce method and economy into the administration of affairs, have induced me, though with reluctance, to accept that office.[1] Mr. Jay will receive by this conveyance, and forward to you, copies of those resolutions and letters which may be necessary to explain my appointment and powers.

I wish I could as readily effect, as I most ardently desire, the accomplishment of all proper arrangements. Thoroughly convinced that no country is

[1] Mr. Morris was appointed Superintendent of Finance on the 20th of February, 1781, but did not engage in the duties of the office till May following.

truly independent, until, with her own credit and resources, she is able to defend herself and correct her enemies, it shall be my constant endeavor to establish our credit and draw out our resources in such manner, that we may be little burdensome and essentially useful to our friends.

I am sure I need not mention to *you* the importance of collecting a revenue with ease, and expending it with economy. As little need I detail the time, the authority, the ability, the favorable circumstances, that must combine for these purposes. But I think that I may assert that the situation of a country, just emerging from dependence and struggling for existence, is peculiarly unfavorable; and I may add that this country, by relying too much on paper, is in a condition of peculiar disorder and debility. To rescue and restore her is an object equal to my warmest wishes, though probably beyond the stretch of my abilities.

Success will greatly depend on the pecuniary aid we may obtain from abroad; because money is necessary to introduce economy, while, at the same time, economy is necessary to obtain money; besides that, a greater plenty of solid circulating medium is required to support those operations which must give stability to our credit, fruitfulness to our revenue, and activity to our operations. Among those things which, after the experience and example of other ages and nations, I have been induced to adopt, is that of a national bank, the plan of which I enclose. I mean to render this a principal pillar of American credit, so as to obtain the money of

individuals for the benefit of the Union, and thereby bind those individuals more strongly to the general cause by the ties of private interest. To the efficacy of this plan, as well as to the establishment of a mint, which would also be of use, a considerable sum of money is necessary, and, indeed, it is indispensably so for many other purposes.

Be not alarmed, sir, from what I have said, with the apprehension that I am about to direct solicitations to the court of Versailles; which, after the repeated favors they have conferred, must be peculiarly disagreeable. On the contrary, as I am convinced that the moneys of France will all be usefully employed in the vigorous prosecution of the war by her own fleets and armies, I lament every sum which is diverted from them. Our necessities have, indeed, called for her aid, and perhaps they may continue to do so. Those calls have hitherto been favorably attended to, and the pressure of our necessities has been generously alleviated; nor do I at all doubt that future exigencies will excite the same dispositions in our favor, and that those dispositions will be followed with correspondent effects. But I again repeat my wish, at once to render America independent of, and useful to, her friends.

With these views, I have directed Mr. Jay to ask a considerable sum from the court of Madrid, to be advanced us at the Havana, and brought thence by us, if it cannot conveniently be landed here from Spanish men-of-war. I say a *considerable sum*, because, as I have declared to him, I do not wish to labor under the weight of obligation without deriving

from it any real benefit, and because I consider the advance of small sums rather as a temporary palliation than a radical remedy. Our disorders are such that the former can be of no use, and it would be better to desist in a desultory defence than to put on the delusive appearance of a vigor we do not feel; for this lulls the people into a dangerous security, and softens those hopes of the enemy which give duration and extent to the war. It is the disorder of our finances which has prevented us from a powerful co-operation with our allies, and which has enabled the enemy to linger on our coasts with the dregs of a force once formidable; and it is from this cause that they have been permitted to extend the theatre, and multiply the victims, of their ambition.

America alone will not derive benefit from the advances which Spain may make to her. All the associates in the war will feel the *consequential* advantages. The expense of the American war now hangs a heavy weight around Britain, and enfeebles her on that element which she called her own. An increase of that expense, or the loss of her posts here, must necessarily follow from additional efforts on our part; and either of these must be a consequential benefit to those who are opposed to her. France will derive a small *immediate* benefit from it, as she will thereby get more money here for her bills of exchange than she can at present procure. But it is not so much from any advantage which may be expected to that kingdom, or from any motives of *interest*, as from the generosity and magnanimity of the prince, that we hope for support. I will not

doubt a moment that, at your instance, his Majesty will make pressing representations in support of Mr. Jay's application, and I hope that the authority of so great a sovereign, and the arguments of his able ministry, will shed auspicious influence on our negotiations at Madrid.

From the best returns I have been able to collect, and which are in some measure imperfect, from the confusions and disasters of the Southern States, I find that there are about seven million two hundred thousand dollars due on certificates, which bear an interest of six per cent., payable in France at the rate of five livres for every dollar. Many causes have conspired to depreciate the certificates, notwithstanding the interest is so well secured and has been punctually paid. This depreciation is so great that they are daily offered for sale at a very considerable discount, which is attended with two pernicious consequences: one, that a considerable expense is unnecessarily incurred; and the other, that the public credit is unnecessarily impaired. If I had the means, therefore, I would remove this evil by purchasing in the certificates; and to procure this means I am to pray that you would state this matter fully to the ministers of his most Christian Majesty. The interest being guaranteed by the court of France, they now pay for this purpose two million one hundred and sixty thousand livres annually, a sum which in less than ten years would pay a debt of fifteen millions of livres at five per cent. interest. With fifteen millions of livres, however, prudently managed, the whole of these certificates might be

paid. I am sure it is unnecessary to dwell on the advantages which would result from making such a loan for this purpose; and I trust that if this matter is stated to M. Necker that enlightened minister will co-operate in the plan to the utmost of his ability. I again repeat that I do not wish to lay any burdens on France; but this proposal is calculated to relieve us both; and, in any case, the expense to France will be the same. Should it be adopted, I must request the earliest notice, that my operations may commence; and, in any case, I hope that secrecy will be observed, for the most evident reasons.

I am sorry to inform you that we have as yet no satisfactory news of the ship *Lafayette;* but, on the contrary, her long delay occasions the most alarming apprehensions. If, as but too probable, that ship is lost, you will more easily conceive than I can describe what will be the situation of our troops next winter.

I could wish, as soon as possible, to have a state of all the public accounts transmitted, to the end that moneys due to the United States may be paid, and measures taken to provide for such sums as they stand indebted in to others. Your Excellency will, I dare say, send them as soon as may be convenient; and I hope the public affairs will hereafter be conducted in such a manner as to give you much less of that unnecessary trouble which you have hitherto experienced, and which could not but have harassed you exceedingly, and perhaps taken up time which would otherwise have been devoted to more important objects.

I shall probably have frequent occasion to address

you, and shall always be happy to hear from you; but the mischiefs which arise from having letters intercepted are great and alarming. I have, therefore, enclosed you a cipher, and in the duplicate of my letters I shall enclose you another. If both arrive, you will use one; and, in case of your absence, leave the other with such person as may supply your place. Let me know, however, which cipher you use.

The bearer of this letter, Major Franks, formerly an aide-de-camp to General Arnold, and honorably acquitted of all connection with him, after a full and impartial inquiry, will be able to give you our public news more particularly than I could relate them. He sails hence for Cadiz, and on his arrival will proceed to Madrid, where, having delivered my letters to Mr. Jay, he will take his orders for you. He will then wait your orders, and, I hope, will soon after meet a safe opportunity of coming to America. With the most perfect esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROBERT MORRIS.

DCCCCLXXXIV

TO FELIX VICQ D'AZYR [1]

PASSY, 20 July, 1781.

SIR:—I received the letter you some time since did me the honor of writing to me, accompanied with a number of the pieces that were distributed at the

[1] Physician to the Queen of France.

last public meeting of the Royal Society of Medicine. I shall take care to forward them to different parts of America, as desired. Be pleased to present my thanks to the society for the copy sent me of the curious and useful reports relating to the sepulture in the island of Malta. I should be glad of another copy, if it can be spared, being desirous of sending one to each of the philosophical societies in America.

With respect to the length of time during which the power of infection may be contained in dead bodies, which is considered in that report, I would mention to you three facts which, though not all of equal importance or weight, yet methinks it may be well to preserve a memorandum of them, that such observations may be made, when occasion offers, as are proper to confirm or invalidate them.

While I resided in England, I read in a newspaper that in a country village at the funeral of a woman whose husband had died of the small-pox thirty years before, and whose grave was dug so as to place her by his side, the neighbors attending the funeral were offended with the smell arising out of the grave, occasioned by a breach in the husband's old coffin, and twenty-five of them, were in a few days taken ill with that distemper, which before was not in that village or its neighborhood, nor had been for the number of years above mentioned.

About the years 1763 or 1764, several physicians of London, who had been present from curiosity, at the dissection of an Egyptian mummy, were soon after taken ill of a malignant fever, of which they died. Opinions were divided on this question. It

was thought by some that the fever was caused by infection from the mummy, in which case the disease it died of must have been embalmed as well as the body. Others who considered the length of time, at least two thousand years, since that body died, and also that the embalming must be rather supposed to destroy the power of infection, imagined the illness of these gentlemen must have had another origin.

About the year 1773, the captain of a ship, which had been at the island of Teneriffe, brought from thence the dried body of one of the ancient inhabitants of that island, which must have been at least three hundred years old, that custom of drying the dead there having been so long discontinued. Two members of the Royal Society went to see that body. They were half an hour in a small close room with it, examining it very particularly. The next day they were both affected with a singularly violent *cold*,[1] attended with uncommon circumstances, which continued a long time. On comparing together the particulars of their disorder, they agreed in suspecting that possibly some effluvia from the body might have been the occasion of that disorder in them both; perhaps they were mistaken. But, as we do not yet know with certainty how long the power of infection may in some bodies be retained, it seems well in such cases to be cautious till further light shall be obtained.

I wish it were in my power to contribute more

[1] Cold is a general name given by the English to all sorts of rheums and catarrhs.—F.

essentially in advancing the good work the society are so laudably engaged in. Perhaps some useful hints may be extracted from the enclosed paper of Mr. Small's.[1] It is submitted to your judgment; and if you should find any thing in it worthy of being communicated to the society, and of which extracts may be useful if printed in the memoirs, it will be a pleasure to me; who am, with great esteem and respect, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S. July 24th.—Since writing the above, I have met with the following article in the *Courier de l'Europe* of the 13th instant, viz.:

Extract of a Letter from Edinburgh, dated June 30th

"I understand by a person just returned from Montrose that the epidemic fever, which has made its appearance in the county of Mearns, ravages that neighborhood with such violence that one of his friends was invited to attend fifteen funerals on the same day. It is said that this malady originated in the ill-judged curiosity of some country people, who, at Candlemas last, opened the graves of some persons who had died of the plague in the preceding century, and who had been buried in the Moss of Arnhall. The circumstances which have happened in the family of Mr. Robert Aikenhead are singularly unfortunate; about the middle of last month he took the infection, which was communicated to the rest of his family, consisting of nine persons; two of

[1] The article on *Ventilation*, by Mr. Small, Vol. V., p. 105.

whom, together with himself, are dead, and the others not out of danger."

DCCCCLXXXV

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 26 July, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I have just received your very friendly letter of the 6th of June past, announcing your appointment to the superintendence of our finances. This gave me great pleasure, as, from your intelligence, integrity, and abilities, there is reason to hope every advantage that the public can possibly receive from such an office. You are wise in estimating beforehand, as the principal advantage you can expect, the consciousness of having done service to your country; for the business you have undertaken is of so complex a nature, and must engross so much of your time and attention, as necessarily to injure your private interests; and the public is often niggardly, even of its thanks, while you are sure of being censured by malevolent critics and bug-writers, who will abuse you while you are serving them, and wound your character in nameless pamphlets; thereby resembling those little dirty insects that attack us only in the dark, disturb our repose, molesting and wounding us, while our sweat and blood are contributing to their subsistence. Every assistance that my situation here, as long as it continues, may enable me to afford you, shall certainly be given;

for, besides my affection for the glorious cause we are both engaged in, I value myself upon your friendship, and shall be happy if mine can be made of any use to you.

With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, dear sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—With this I shall send an answer to your official letter of June 8th.

DCCCCLXXXVI

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 26 July, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I have received the letter you honored me with, of the 8th of June past,[1] acquainting me that, as Superintendent of Finance, you have named Messrs. Couteulx & Co., at Paris, to receive from his Majesty's ministers the money granted to Congress, that they may be enabled to honor your bills whenever they appear; and you intimate a desire to be informed of the responsibility of that house.

With regard to the six millions given by the king in aid of our operations for the present campaign, before the arrival of Mr. Laurens, two millions five hundred thousand of it went in the same ship with him in cash; stores equivalent to two millions two hundred thousand more of it were ordered by him and are shipped; one million five hundred thousand

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. XI., p. 370.

was sent to Holland, to go in the ship commanded by Commodore Gillon. Add to this, that Captain Jackson, by his orders, purchased clothing and stores in Holland to the value of about fifty thousand pounds sterling, for which he has drawn bills on me, which bills I accepted, and also agreed to pay those drawn on Messrs. Laurens, Jay, and Adams; expecting aid from a projected loan of ten millions of livres for our use in Holland. But, this loan meeting with unforeseen difficulties, and its success uncertain, I have found myself obliged to stop the money in Holland, in order to be able to save the honor of the Congress drafts, and to comply with my engagements.

By these means you have really at present no funds here to draw upon. I hope, however, that Messrs. Couteulx & Co. will be enabled to honor your drafts; but I trust in your prudence that you will draw no more till you have advice of funds provided. And, as the laying out so much money in Holland instead of France is disapproved here, and the payment will, therefore, not be provided for, I must earnestly request your aid in remitting that sum to me before December next, when my acceptances will become due, otherwise I shall be ruined with the American credit in Europe.

With regard to the wealth and credit of the house of Le Couteulx & Co., I have never heard it in question. But as Mr. Ferdinand Grand, banker at Paris, and his brother, Sir George Grand, banker in Holland, have been our zealous and firm friends ever since our arrival in France, have aided us greatly by

their personal interest and solicitations, and have often been six or seven hundred thousand livres in advance for us, and are houses of unquestionable solidity, I cannot but be concerned at any step for taking our business out of their hands, and wish your future bills may be drawn on Ferdinand Grand; for I think it concerns our public reputation to preserve the character of gratitude, as well as that of honesty and justice. The commission hitherto charged to us by Mr. Grand for receiving and paying our money is a half per cent., which, considering the trouble given by the vast number of small drafts for interest of the loans, appears to me a moderate consideration. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXXVII

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 6 August, 1781.

Sir:—I some time since gave orders, as you desired, to Mr. Grand to furnish you with a credit in Holland for the remainder of your salary to November next. But I am now told that, your account having been mixed with Mr. Dana's, he finds it difficult to know the sum due to you. Be pleased therefore to state your account for two years, giving credit for the sums you have received, that an order may be made for the balance. Upon this occasion it is right to acquaint you that I do not think we can

depend on receiving any more money here, applicable to the support of the Congress ministers.

What aids are hereafter granted will probably be transmitted by the government directly to America. It will therefore be proper to inform Congress, that care may be taken to furnish their servants by remittances from thence. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXXVIII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 6 August, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I received several letters from you lately, enclosing others for the President of Congress, and for Spain, all of which are sealed and forwarded, except the last for the President, contained in yours of the 26th past, which shall go by the first opportunity. The reading of those letters gave me much information, and therefore pleasure; though, since the fixing of Mr. Adams there, I do not attend so much to the affairs of your country as before, expecting indeed but little from it to our advantage; for, though it was formerly in the same situation with us, and was glad of assistance from other nations, it does not seem to *feel* for us, or to have the least inclination to help us; it appears to want magnanimity.

Some writer, I forget who, says that Holland is no longer *a nation*, but *a great shop;* and I begin to think it has no other principles or sentiments but

those of a shopkeeper. You can judge of it better than I, and I shall be happy to find myself mistaken. You will oblige me, however, by continuing the history either directly to me or in your letters to Congress; but when you enclose a sealed letter in another to me, please to observe to place the second seal on one side, and not directly over the first; because the heat of the second is apt to deface the impression of the first, and to attach the paper to it, so as to endanger tearing the enclosed in opening the cover. With best wishes for your health and prosperity, I am ever, dear sir, etc.

B. Franklin.

P. S.—I pity the writer of the enclosed, though I have no other acquaintance with him than having seen him once at Hanover, where he then seemed to live genteelly and in good credit. I cannot conceive what should reduce him to such a situation as to engage himself for a soldier. If you can procure him any friends among the philosophers of your country capable of relieving him, I wish you would do it. If not, and he must go to the Indies, please to give him three or four guineas for me, to buy a few necessaries for his voyage.

DCCCCLXXXIX

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 10 August, 1781.

Dear Sir:—Enclosed I send you a late paper received from Rhode Island. You will see in it the

advantages our troops have gained in South Carolina. Late advices directly from Philadelphia say that the enemy have now nothing left in Georgia but Savannah; in South Carolina but Charleston; nor in North Carolina but Wilmington. They are, however, in force in Virginia, where M. de Lafayette has not sufficient strength to oppose them, till the arrival of reinforcements, which were on their march to join him from Maryland and Pennsylvania.

In looking over my last to you, I apprehend I may have expressed myself perhaps a little too hardly of your country; I foresee you will tell me that we have many friends there; I once thought so too; but I was a little out of humor when I wrote, on understanding that no loan could be obtained there for our use, though the credit of this kingdom was offered to be engaged for assuring the payment, and so much is lent freely to our enemies. You can best tell the reason; it will be well not to let my letter be seen. I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXC

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

Passy, 24 August, 1781.

Dear Sir:—On looking over your letters, I am ashamed to find myself so much and so long in your debt. I thank you for making me acquainted with M. Sonnerat. He appears a very amiable man, and is full of intelligence and information.

We are all much obliged to Count de Montmorin [1] for his friendly assistance in our affairs. Please to present to him my thankful acknowledgments. I thank you also for my being made known to M. Giusti; I saw him often, and had much satisfaction and pleasure in his conversation.

The Congress have done me the honor to refuse accepting my resignation, and insist on my continuing in their service till the peace. I must therefore buckle again to business, and thank God that my health and spirits are of late improved. I fancy it may have been a double mortification to those enemies you have mentioned to me, that I should ask as a favor what they hoped to vex me by taking from me; and that I should nevertheless be continued. But this sort of considerations should never influence our conduct. We ought always to do what appears best to be done, without much regarding what others may think of it. I call this continuance an honor, and I really esteem it to be a greater than my first appointment, when I consider that all the interest of my enemies, united with my own request, were not sufficient to prevent it.[2]

[1] French Ambassador in Spain.

[2] On this subject Dr. Franklin once wrote to another friend: "Your comparison of the *keystone of an arch* is very pretty, tending to make me content with my situation. But I suppose you have heard our story of the *harrow;* if not, here it is. A farmer, in our country, sent two of his servants to borrow one of a neighbor, ordering them to bring it between them on their shoulders. When they came to look at it, one of them, who had much wit and cunning, said: 'What could our master mean by sending only two men to bring this harrow? No two men upon earth are strong enough to carry it.' 'Poh!' said the other, who was vain of his strength, 'what do you talk of two men? One man can carry it. Help it up on my shoulders and see.' As he

I have not yet received the works of your Economical Society, or those of its founder. I suppose you have not met with an opportunity of sending them. The letter you propose sending to our Philosophical Society will be very acceptable to them. I shall be glad to peruse the copy you propose passing through my hands. Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXCI

TO WILLIAM NIXON [1]

PASSY, 5 September, 1781.

REVEREND SIR:—I duly received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 25th past, together with the valuable little book, of which you are the author. There can be no doubt but that a gentleman of your learning and abilities might make a very useful member of society in our new country, and meet with encouragement there, either as an instructor in one of our universities, or as a clergyman of the Church of Ireland. But I am not empowered to engage any person to go over thither, and my abilities to assist the distressed are very limited. I

proceeded with it, the wag kept exclaiming, 'Zounds, how strong you are! I could not have thought it! Why, you are a Samson! There is no such another man in America! What amazing strength God has given you! But you will kill yourself! Pray put it down and rest a little, or let me bear a part of the weight.' 'No, no,' said he, being more encouraged by the compliments than oppressed by the burden; 'you shall see I can carry it quite home.' An so he did. In this particular I am afraid my part of the imitation will fall short of the original."

[1] An English clergyman, prisoner on parole, at Valognes.

suppose you will soon be set at liberty in England by the cartel for the exchange of prisoners. In the meantime, if five *louis-d'ors* will be of present service to you, please to draw on me for that sum, and your bill shall be paid on sight. Some time or other you may have an opportunity of assisting with an equal sum a stranger who has equal need of it. Do so. By that means you will discharge any obligation you may suppose yourself under to me. Enjoin him to do the same on occasion. By pursuing such a practice, much good may be done with little money. Let kind offices go round. Mankind are all of a family. I have the honor to be, reverend sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCII

TO ROBERT MORRIS

Passy, 12 September, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I have received your letters of July 13th, 14th, 19th, and 21st, all at once, by way of L'Orient. The originals of those you mention to have sent by Major Franks are not yet come to hand, nor have I heard of his arrival in Spain. Your letters of June 6th and 8th were remarkably lucky in getting to hand. I think I have received seven of the copies you had the precaution to send me. I enclose copies of my answers.

I have now the pleasure to acquaint you that I have obtained a promise of the sum I wanted to pay the bills I had accepted for the purchases made in Holland; so that your supplying me with remit-

tances for that purpose, which I requested, is now unnecessary, and I shall finish the year with honor. But it is as much as I can do, with the aid of the sum I stopped in Holland; the drafts on Mr. Jay and on Mr. Adams much exceeding what I had been made to expect.

I had been informed that the Congress had promised to draw no more bills on Europe after the month of March last, till they should know they had funds here; but I learn from Mr. Adams that some bills have been lately presented to him, drawn June 22d, on Mr. Laurens, who is in the Tower, which makes the proceeding seem extraordinary. Mr. Adams cannot pay these bills, and I cannot engage for them; for I see by the minutes of Congress you have sent me that, though they have stopped issuing bills drawn on the ministers at Madrid and the Hague until they shall be assured that funds are provided for paying them, they have left open to be sold those drawn on their minister at Versailles, funds or no funds; which, in the situation you will see I am in by the letters of the Count de Vergennes, terrifies me; for I have promised not to accept any drafts made on me by order of Congress, if such should be after the time above mentioned, unless I have funds in my hands, or in view, to pay them. After its being declared to me that such bills could not be provided for, and my promise not to engage for them, it will be impossible to ask for the money, if I should accept them; and I believe those bills of Mr. Ross must go back protested.

The projected loan in Holland has of late some

appearances of success. I am indeed told it is agreed to by the States; but I do not yet think it so certain as to venture, or advise the venturing, to act in expectation of it. The instant it is assured, I will send you advice of it by every opportunity, and will, from time to time, send parts of it in cash by such ships of war as can conveniently take it.

I cannot write to you fully by this opportunity. I will not, however, delay acquainting you that, having the fullest confidence in your assurances of enabling me to pay them, I shall cheerfully accept your bills of four hundred thousand livres. Captain Gillon has sailed from Holland, without taking under his convoy the two vessels that were freighted to carry the goods purchased by Captain Jackson in Holland. There has been terrible management there; and from the confusion in the ship before and when she sailed, it is a question if she ever arrives in America.

They are hard at work here in providing the supplies to replace those lost in the *Marquis de Lafayette*. With best wishes of success to you in your new employment, and assurances of every aid I can afford you, I am, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCIII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 13 September, 1781.

Sir:—I duly received the two letters your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, both dated

the 19th of June, together with the letter addressed to the king and the three commissioners with the instructions relative to the negotiations for peace. I immediately went to Versailles and presented the letter, which was graciously received. I communicated also to Count de Vergennes a copy of your instructions after having deciphered them. He read them while I was with him, and expressed his satisfaction with the unreserved confidence placed in his court by the Congress, assuring me that they never would have cause to regret it, for that the king had the honor of the United States at heart, as well as their welfare and independence. Indeed, this has already been manifested in the negotiations relative to the plenipotentiaries; and I have had so much experience of his Majesty's goodness to us, in the aids afforded us from time to time, and of the sincerity of this upright and able minister, who never promised me any thing which he did not punctually perform, that I cannot but think the confidence well and judiciously placed, and that it will have happy effects.

I have communicated to Mr. Adams and to Mr. Jay the purport of your despatches. Mr. Adams already had received the same; by the first safe conveyance, I shall acquaint the Congress with the steps that have been taken in the negotiation. At present I would only say that the settling of preliminaries meets with difficulty, and will probably take much time, partly from the remoteness of the mediators; so that any relaxation of our warlike preparations, in expectation of a speedy peace, will be imprudent, as it may be pernicious.

I am extremely sensible of the honor done me by the Congress in this new appointment. I beg they would accept my thankful acknowledgments; and, since they judge I may be serviceable, though I had requested leave to retire, I submit dutifully to their determination, and shall do my utmost to merit in some degree the favorable opinion they appear to have of me. I am the more encouraged in this resolution, as within the last three months I find my health and strength considerably re-established.

I wish, however, that the consul-general may soon be appointed for this kingdom; it would ease me of abundance of troublesome business, to which I am not equal, and which interferes with my own important functions.

The king having graciously complied with my request, of replacing the supplies lost in the *Marquis de Lafayette*, many hands are employed in providing them, who work hard to have them ready and shipped so that they arrive before winter. With the highest respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—The copying machine for Mr. Secretary Thomson is in hand, and will soon be finished and sent to him.

DCCCCXCIV

TO DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER [1]

Passy, 13 September, 1781.

Sir:—I received the very obliging letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 20th of June last.

[1] Member of Congress from Maryland.

It gave me great satisfaction to find, by the unanimous choice you mention, that my services had not been unacceptable to Congress; and to hear also that they were favorably disposed towards my grandson, Temple Franklin. It was my desire to quit public business, fearing it might suffer in my hands through the infirmities incident to my time of life. But, as they are pleased to think I may still be useful, I submit to their judgment, and shall do my best.

I immediately forwarded the letter you enclosed for Mr. Lowndes; and if in any thing else I can do you service or pleasure here, please to command me freely. I have the honor to be, with great regard, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCV

TO RICHARD BACHE

Passy, 13 September, 1781.

Dear Son:—I received yours of June 20th. It gave me great pleasure, as it informed me of the welfare of yourself and the dear family.

I have read Mr. Wharton's pamphlet. The facts, as far as I know them, are as he states them. Justice is, I think, on the side of those who contracted for the lands.[1] But moral and political rights sometimes differ, and sometimes are both subdued by might. I received, and thank you for, several copies of the Indian *Spelling Book*. I received also the German and English newspapers.

[1] The Indiana grant.

Among my papers in the trunk, which I unhappily left in the care of Mr. Galloway, were eight or ten quire or two-quire books, of rough drafts of my letters, containing all my correspondence when in England, for near twenty years. I shall be very sorry if they too are lost. Do not you think it possible, by going up into that country, and inquiring a little among the neighbors, you might possibly hear of and recover some of them. I should not have left them in his hands if he had not deceived me by saying that though he was before otherwise inclined, yet that, since the king had declared us out of his protection, and the Parliament by an act had made our properties plunder, he would go as far in the defence of his country as any man, and accordingly he had lately, with pleasure, given colors to a regiment of militia, and an entertainment to four hundred of them before his house. I thought he was become a staunch friend to the glorious cause. I was mistaken. As he was a friend of my son's, to whom in my will I had left all my books and papers, I made him one of my executors, and put the trunk of papers in his hands, imagining them safer in his house (which was out of the way of any probable march of the enemy's troops) than in my own. It was very unlucky.

My love to Sally and the children. I shall soon write to all my friends. At present I am pinched in time, and can only add that I am ever your affectionate father,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCVI

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON

PASSY, 13 September, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I have received your kind letter of July 17th, with its duplicate, enclosing those for Messrs. Brandlight & Sons, which I have forwarded. I am sorry for the loss of the *Squibs*. Every thing of yours gives me pleasure.

As to the friends and enemies you just mention, I have hitherto, thanks to God, had plenty of the former kind; they have been my treasure, and it has perhaps been of no disadvantage to me that I have had a few of the latter. They serve to put us upon correcting the faults we have, and avoiding those we are in danger of having. They counteract the mischief flattery might do us, and the malicious attacks make our friends more zealous in serving us and promoting our interest. At present I do not know of more than two such enemies that I enjoy, viz. —— and ——. I deserve the enmity of the latter, because I might have avoided it by paying him a compliment, which I neglected. That of the former I owe to the people of France, who happened to respect me too much and him too little, which I could bear, and he could not. They are unhappy that they cannot make everybody hate me as much as they do, and I should be so if my friends did not love me much more than those gentlemen can possibly love one another.

Enough of this subject. Let me know if you are in possession of my gimcrack instruments, and if you

have made any new experiments. I lent, many years ago, a large glass globe, mounted, to Mr. Coombe, and an electric battery of bottles, which I remember; perhaps there were some other things. He may have had them so long as to think them his own. Pray ask him for them, and keep them for me, together with the rest.

You have a new crop of prose writers. I see in your papers many of their fictitious names, but nobody tells me the real. You will oblige me by a little of your literary history. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours affectionately,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCVII

TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ

Passy, 2 October, 1781.

It is a long time, my dear friend, since I have had the pleasure of writing to you. I have postponed it too often from a desire of writing a good deal on various subjects, which I could not find sufficient time to think of properly. Your experiments *on the conducting of heat* was one subject; the finishing my *remarks on the stroke of lightning in Italy* was another. Then I was taken ill with a severe fit of the gout soon after you left us, which held me near three months, and put my business and correspondence so far behindhand that I was long in getting it up again. Add to this, that I find indolence increases with age, and that I have not near the activity I

formerly had. But I cannot afford to lose your correspondence, in which I have always found so much pleasure and instruction. I now force myself to write, and I fancy this letter will be long.

I have now before me your several favors of December 5th, 1780, February 7th, April 7th, May 23d, and August 29th, 1781. I was glad to find by the first that you enjoyed a good state of health, and that you had leisure to pursue your philosophical inquiries. I wish you that continued success, which so much industry, sagacity, and exactness in making experiments have a right to expect. You will have much immediate pleasure by that success, and in time great reputation. But for the present the reputation will be given grudgingly, and in as small a quantity as possible, mixed, too, with some mortification. One would think that a man so laboring disinterestedly for the good of his fellow-creatures, could not possibly by such means make himself enemies; but there are minds who cannot bear that another should distinguish himself even by greater usefulness; and, though he demands no profit, nor any thing in return but the good-will of those he is serving, they will endeavor to deprive him of that, first, by disputing the truth of his experiments, then their utility; and, being defeated there, they finally dispute his right to them, and would give the credit of them to a man that lived three thousand years ago, or at three thousand leagues' distance, rather than to a neighbor, or even a friend. Go on, however, and never be discouraged. Others have met with the same treatment before you, and will after

you. And, whatever some may think and say, it is worth while to do men good, for the self-satisfaction one has in the reflection.

Your account of the experiments you made with the wires gave me a great deal of pleasure. I have shown it to several persons here, who think it exceedingly curious. If you should ever repeat those experiments, I wish your attention to one circumstance. I think it possible that, in dipping them into the wax, and taking them out suddenly, the metal which attracts heat most readily may chill and draw out with it a thicker coat of wax; and this thicker coat might, in the progress of the experiment, be longer melting. They should therefore be kept so long in the wax, as to be all and equally heated. Perhaps you may thus find the progress of heat in the silver quicker and greater. I think, also, that, if the hot oil in which you dipped the ends was not stagnant, but in motion, the experiment would be more complete, because the wire which quickest diminishes the heat of the oil next to it, finds soonest the difficulty of getting more heat from the oil farther distant, which depends on the nature of the oil as a conductor of heat, that which is already cooled interfering between the hotter oil and the wire. In reversing the experiment also, to try which of the metals cools fastest, I think the wires should be dipped in *running* cold water; for, when stagnant, the hot wires, by communicating heat to the water that is near them, will make it less capable of receiving more heat; and, as the metals which communicate their heat most freely and readily will

soonest warm the water round them, the operation of such metals may therefore soonest stop; not because they naturally longer withhold their heat, but because the water near them is not in a state to receive it. I do not know that these hints are founded; I suggest them only as meriting a little consideration. Every one is surprised that the progress of the heat seems to have no connection with the gravity or the levity of the metals.

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXCVIII

From John Adams

Amsterdam, 4 October, 1781.

Sir:—Since the 25th of August, when I had the honor to write to you, this is the first time that I have taken a pen in hand to write to anybody, having been confined, and reduced too low to do any kind of business, by a nervous fever.

The new commission for peace has been a great consolation to me, because it removed from the public all danger of suffering any inconvenience, at a time when for many days together there were many chances to one that I should have nothing more to do with commissions of any sort. It is still a great satisfaction to me, because I think it a measure essentially right, both as it is a greater demonstration of respect to the powers whose ministers may assemble to make peace, and as it is better calculated to give satisfaction to the people of America,

as the commissioners are chosen from the most considerable places in that country.

It is probable that the French court is already informed of the alteration, nevertheless I should think it proper that it should be officially notified to the Count de Vergennes; and if you are of the same opinion, as you are near, I should be obliged to you if you would communicate to his Excellency an authentic copy of the new commission.

I should think, too, that it would be proper to give some intimation of it to the public in the *Gazette* or *Mercure de France*, the two papers which are published with the consent of the court; and if you are of the same opinion, upon consulting the Count de Vergennes, I should be glad to see it done.

Have you any information concerning Mr. Jefferson, whether he has accepted the trust, whether he has embarked, or proposes soon to embark, etc. I saw a paragraph in a Maryland paper, which expressed an apprehension that he was taken prisoner by a party of horse in Virginia.[1]

I feel a strong curiosity to know the answer of the British court to the articles to serve as a basis. I should be much obliged to your Excellency for a copy of it, if to be procured, and for your opinion whether there will be a congress or not. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, etc.,

JOHN ADAMS.

[1] The commissioners were John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson. Mr. Jefferson did not accept the appointment.

DCCCCXCIX

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 12 October, 1781.

SIR:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me the 4th instant. I have never known a peace made, even the most advantageous, that was not censured as inadequate, and the makers condemned as injudicious or corrupt. "BLESSED *are the peace-makers*," is, I suppose, to be understood in the other world, for in this they are frequently *cursed*. Being as yet rather too much attached to this world, I had therefore no ambition to be concerned in fabricating this peace, and I know not how I came to be put into the commission. I esteem it, however, as an honor to be joined with you in so important a business, and if the execution of it shall happen in my time, which I hardly expect, I shall endeavor to assist in discharging the duty according to the best of my judgment.

Immediately on the receipt of the commission of instructions, I communicated them, as directed, to this court. The steps that have been taken in the mediation were verbally communicated to me, but as yet I have had no copies given me of the papers. I asked if it was not proper to communicate to the ministers of the mediating powers the commission of Congress empowering us to accept their mediation, and was advised to postpone it a little. I will endeavor, on Tuesday next, to obtain for you a copy of the answer of the British court, which you desire, and will consult on the propriety of mentioning our commission in the public papers.

I have heard nothing of Mr. Jefferson. I imagine the story of his being taken prisoner is not true. From his original unwillingness to leave America, when I was sent hither, I think his coming doubtful, unless he had been made acquainted with and consented to the appointment.

I hope your health is fully established. I doubt not but you have the advice of skilful physicians, otherwise I should presume to offer mine, which would be, though you find yourself well, to take a few doses of bark, by way of fortifying your constitution, and preventing a return of your fever. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

M

TO EDMUND BURKE

Passy, 15 October, 1781.

Sir:—I received but a few days since your very friendly letter of August last, on the subject of General Burgoyne.

Since the foolish part of mankind will make wars from time to time with each other, not having sense enough otherwise to settle their differences, it certainly becomes the wiser part, who cannot prevent those wars, to alleviate as much as possible the calamities attending them. Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; but his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable, and makes the honor he does me of admitting me of the number still more precious.

I do not think the Congress have any wish to

persecute General Burgoyne. I never heard, till I received your letter, that they had recalled him; if they have made such a resolution, it must be, I suppose, a conditional one, to take place in case their offer of exchanging him for Mr. Laurens should not be accepted; a resolution intended merely to enforce that offer.

I have just received an authentic copy of the resolve containing that offer; and authorizing me to make it. As I have no communication with your ministers, I send it enclosed to you.[1] If you can find any means of negotiating this business, I am sure the restoring of another worthy man to his family and friends will be an addition to your pleasure. With great and invariable respect and affection, I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.[2]

[1] "*In Congress, June* 13, 1781: Resolved That the Minister Plenipotentiary from these United States at the court of Versailles be authorized and empowered to offer Lieutenant-General Burgoyne in exchange for the Honorable Henry Laurens."

[2] In Burke's letter soliciting Franklin's aid in persuading Congress not to insist upon the surrender of Burgoyne, who was in England only as a prisoner on parole, he said:

"You, my dear sir, who have made such astonishing exertions in the cause which you espouse, and are so deeply read in human nature and human morals, know better than anybody that men will, and that sometimes they are bound to, take very different views and measures of their duty, from local and from professional situation; and that we may all have equal merit in extremely different lines of conduct. In this piece of experimental philosophy I run no risk of offending you. I apply not to the ambassador of America but to Dr. Franklin, the philosopher, the friend and the lover of his species."

Burke was unacquainted with Laurens when Franklin's letter called his attention to the circumstances of his confinement in the Tower. As soon as he learned that the prisoner was suffering the rigors of a close imprisonment, prevented from carrying on a proper correspondence with his friends and family, and even denied the use of pen and

MI

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PHILADELPHIA, 24 October, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—Three days since, I did myself the honor to write to you, informing you of my appoint-

ink, all his sympathies were awakened. He determined to leave nothing undone to oblige the government to mitigate the hardships of his confinement, and to procure his release. On meeting with some rebuffs from the ministers for his interference in the business, he immediately gave notice that on the 3d Dec. he would call the attention of the House to the case of Col. Laurens.

All the obstructive machinery of the Treasury, says Mr. Knight,[1] was employed to frustrate his endeavors with respect to the American statesman. First he heard from one secretary, then from another. He was assured that Gen. Burgoyne had already been exchanged. His representations of the hardships Laurens was suffering in the Tower were denied. When he announced his intention to bring the whole matter before the House, he was told that Lord Hillsborough, the Secretary of State, was utterly indifferent as to the course he might take. He was dared to do his worst. He had acted, it was sneeringly insinuated, with his usual precipitation. He had made charges which he had not the courage to retract, but which he knew it was impossible to substantiate. Thus challenged, on the 17th Dec., he gave notice that immediately after the recess he would bring in a bill to regulate the exchange of prisoners of war, with special application to the cases of Mr. Laurens and Gen. Burgoyne; entering at the same time into a general statement of the hardships which the late President of Congress had undergone.

General Burgoyne, who was a member of that Parliament, rose at once to thank Burke for having striven to procure his release, and for the high terms in which he had spoken of his character. Lord Newhaven, however, on the authority of the Lieutenant of the Tower, questioned the authenticity of Burke's facts, and hinted that the orator himself deserved to be sent to the state prison for entering into a correspondence with Dr. Franklin. "Good God!" exclaimed Lord Newhaven, "can I believe my ears? Do not my senses deceive me? Can a member of this assembly not only avow his correspondence with a rebel, but dare to read it to us? But not only has he done this, but he has actually gone to the ministers avowing what he had done, and even showing them the evidence of his treason." Another county

[1] *Life of Burke*, Vol. II., p. 466.

ment to the Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs,[1] and preparing you for the happy event which has taken

member at once offered to move a vote of censure. Being out of order he was stopped by the Speaker. Burke in reply treated the imputations of treason with contempt. "I am not rich enough," he said, "to occupy apartments in the Tower. Such a prison is better adapted to the rank and fortune of the noble lord. But if I were confined in the Tower, and could there enjoy the society of such men as Laurens and Dr. Franklin, I may perhaps be permitted to say that I should not in any degree regret the loss of the noble lord's company."*

Just before the Christmas recess, Burke brought up the subject again, and in reply to an allegation that Laurens himself did not complain of ill-treatment, read a petition from the prisoner, written with a pencil, complaining of every grievance which had been before charged on his behalf, and praying for a release from the close confinement under which he was languishing. The petition was allowed to lie upon the table.†

Burke had deferred answering Franklin's letter of the 15th of October, awaiting the result of his efforts in Parliament. He now wrote to the philosopher, setting forth the obstacles with which he had to contend, and the discouraging prospects. Fearful lest Congress, provoked by the refusal of an exchange by the English ministers, should renew in a peremptory manner its demand for the return of Burgoyne, Burke earnestly besought Franklin's good offices to prevent such a proceeding. "I could wish," he wrote, "that this government would take the lead in every act of generosity. But Providence has not done its work by halves. Things are disposed of otherwise; and along with the gifts of fortune you have what fortune alone cannot give. I wished to grant, and I am left to supplicate."‡

His supplications were happily needless. The bill of which he had given notice accomplished its work without being introduced. His energetic representations in the House of Commons produced the desired results, and during the holidays, Laurens was admitted to bail, and shortly afterwards exchanged for Burgoyne.

When Laurens came to know, if he ever did, the extent of his obligations to Franklin for his release, he doubtless reproached himself for ever having suspected the Doctor of indifference or insensibility. —Editor.

[1] In that letter Mr. Livingston wrote: "Congress having lately thought it advisable to alter the arrangement of their great executive

Parliamentary Hist., Vol. XXII., p. 865.

† This petition is preserved in Burke's *Collected Speeches*, Vol. II., p. 312.

‡ *Burke's Correspondence*, Vol. II., p. 451.

place. Enclosed you have the capitulation of Yorktown and Gloucester, by which a British army of five thousand six hundred men was surrendered to the allied arms of France and America; and no inconsiderable fleet, with eight hundred seamen, to the navy of his most Christian Majesty.

Since my last, which was written the day after I entered upon office, I have seen yours of the 14th of May. There are many things in it which deserve the attention I mean to pay it, when the first hurry the intelligence I communicate occasions, is over. But, sir, there is a part which I cannot delay to take notice of, because I feel myself interested in opposing the resolution that you seem to have formed, of quitting the station which, for the honor of the United States, you now hold. I shall be impatient till I hear that you comply with the wishes of Con-

departments, and to dissolve the boards and committees under whose direction they formerly were, I am to inform you that they have done me the honor to appoint me their Secretary of Foreign Affairs; in which capacity they have made it my duty, as it will always be my inclination, to maintain an intimate and regular correspondence with you. I have this day taken the oaths of office."

The correspondence between the old Congress and the American agents in Europe was on the 29th of November, 1775, confided to a committee of five, consisting of B. Franklin, Benj. Harrison, John Dickinson, Robert Morris, and John Jay. It was denominated the Committee of Secret Correspondence, and continued to bear that name until April 17, 1777, when it was designated the Committee of Foreign Affairs, the duties, however, remaining practically the same. On the 10th of August, 1781, Robert R. Livingston was chosen Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and upon him were devolved the duties of the committee, which was then dissolved, to the great advantage of the service. Mr. Livingston resigned the Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs to accept the position of Chancellor of the State of New York, and his duties were discharged by Elias Boudinot, President of Congress, for a few months, and until the appointment of John Jay as his successor on the 21st of December, 1784.

gress on this subject, as communicated long since. Though the new powers with which you are invested impose additional burdens upon you, yet, as they at once contain the amplest testimonials of the approbation of Congress, and directly lead to the completion of the great cause in which you so early engaged, I cannot but flatter myself that you will take it upon you. I sent with my first letter to you one to the Count de Vergennes, informing him of my appointment. You will do me the honor to present it. I am, sir, etc., ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MII

TO THOMAS McKEAN, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

PASSY, 5 November, 1781.

SIR:—Herewith you will receive a copy of my last; since which I have been honored with two letters from the late President, the one dated March 2d, relating to Captain Jones' cross of merit, which I have communicated as directed; the other, dated July 5th, respecting the release and exchange of Mr. Laurens.

Having no direct communication with the British ministers, and Mr. Burke appearing, by a letter to me, warmly interested in favor of his friend, General Burgoyne, to prevent his being recalled, I have requested and empowered him to negotiate that exchange, and I soon expect his answer. The late practice of sending to England prisoners taken in

America has greatly augmented the number of those unfortunate men, and proportionally increased the expense of relieving them. The subscriptions for that purpose in England have ceased. The allowance I have made to them of sixpence each per week during the summer, though small, amounts to a considerable sum; and during the winter I shall be obliged to double if not treble it. The Admiralty there will not accept any English in exchange, but such as have been taken by Americans, and absolutely refuse to allow any of the paroles given to our privateers by English prisoners discharged at sea, except in one instance, that of fifty-three men taken in the *Snake* sloop, by the *Pilgrim* and *Rambler*, which was a case attended, as they say, with some particular circumstances. I know not what the circumstances were, but shall be glad to see the fifty-three of our people, whom they promised to send me by the first cartel. I have about five hundred other paroles solemnly given in writing, by which the Englishmen promised either to send our people in exchange or to surrender themselves to me in France, not one of which has been regarded, so little faith and honor remain in that corrupted nation. Our privateers, when in the European seas, will rarely bring in their prisoners when they can get rid of them at sea. Some of our poor brave countrymen have been in that cruel captivity now for near four years. I hope the Congress will take this matter into immediate consideration, and find some means for their deliverance, and to prevent the sending more from America. By my last accounts, the num-

ber now in the several prisons amounts to upwards of eight hundred.

I request also some direction from Congress (having never received any) respecting the allowance to be made to them while they remain there. They complain that the food given them is insufficient. Their petition to the English government to have an equal allowance with the French and Spanish prisoners has been rejected, which makes the small pecuniary assistance I can send them more necessary. If a certain number of English prisoners could be set apart in America, treated exactly in the same manner, and their exchange refused till it should be agreed to set these at liberty in Europe, one might hope to succeed in procuring the discharge of our people. Those who escape and pass through France to get home put me also to a great expense for their land journeys, which could be prevented if they could be exchanged, as they would be landed here in ports.

The ambassador of Venice told me that he was charged by the Senate to express to me their grateful sense of the friendly behavior of Captain Barry, commander of the *Alliance*, in rescuing one of the ships of their state from an English privateer, and setting her at liberty; and he requested me to communicate this acknowledgment to Congress. There is a complaint from Holland against Captain Jones, for having taken the brigantine *Berkenbosch* and sending her to America, and I have been desired to lay before Congress the enclosed depositions relating to that capture, and to request their attention to it.

The ambassador of Portugal also frequently asks

me if I have received any answer to their complaint long since sent over. I wish it was in my power to give one of some kind or other. But none has yet come to my hands. I need not mention the importance of attending to the smallest complaints between nations, the neglect of them having sometimes very serious consequences.

The mediation proposed is not agreed to by England, who refuses to treat with our United States but as a sovereign with subjects; and I apprehend that a change in that resolution is only to be expected from time, the growing insupportable expense of the war, or a course of misfortunes in the progress of it. The spirits of that nation have been continually kept up by the flattering accounts sent over, of our being weary of the contest and on the point of submission. Their ministers, as appears by their intercepted letters, have been themselves so far deceived as to expect daily those submissions, and to have the pleasure of laying them before the king. We may, perhaps, be able to guess a little by the king's speech at the approaching new session of Parliament, whether they still continue under this delusion. As long as it subsists, peace is not to be expected.

A loan has been proposed to be obtained for us of the States of Holland on the credit of this government. All public operations are slow in that country; and though the affair is at length said to be concluded, it is not yet executed. Considerable advances have, however, been made here in expectation of being reimbursed by it. The last aids granted

us have been so absorbed by my payment of the drafts on Mr. Jay and Mr. Adams, and acceptance of those for the enormous unexpected purchases in Holland, which were to have gone in Captain Gillon's ship, but left behind, that I shall have nothing to spare for extraordinaries, unless some of the Holland loan comes soon into my hands. I am now told, from Amsterdam, that the two ships freighted there to carry those goods are detained, as their contract was to sail under convoy of the *South Carolina*, which left them; and they must now take more men to defend them, and of consequence claim a higher freight, and to have it paid before they sail, unless I will buy the ships, and send them on account of Congress, neither of which is in my power to do. It was with reluctance I engaged in that affair, having little confidence in Captain Gillon's management, and fearing some embarrassment of our credit.

I consented, in fine, to engage for the payment of ten thousand pounds sterling, being the value of the goods suitable for Congress, said to be already shipped in that vessel; and, as there was said to be still some room, and she was thought a safe conveyance, I concluded to furnish an additional sum to fill that supposed vacancy, which I limited to five thousand pounds sterling more. You will judge of my surprise when I saw the accounts of that additional purchase, which amounted, instead of five, to fifty thousand pounds sterling. I at first absolutely refused to pay for them. But Captain Jackson came to me from thence express; urged, that the purchase was made by order of Colonel Laurens; that the

goods were on board; that, if I would not undertake to pay for them, they must be relanded, and returned or sold, which would be a public disgrace to us; that they were all articles exceedingly wanted in America, etc. etc. In fine, I was prevailed on, and accepted the bills, and was obliged to go with this after-clap to the ministers, a proceeding always disagreeable, after the dispositions of the funds of the year have been arranged; and more so in this case, as the money was to be paid for the manufactures of other countries, and not laid out in those of this kingdom, by whose friendship it was furnished. This fresh grant was at first absolutely refused; at length I obtained it, and I hoped the difficulty was over.

But, after all, the officers declare the ship was overloaded, that there was not room to lodge the people and provisions, nor to act in fighting her; the goods are turned out into two other ships, those are left, and it is now proposed to me either to buy them or to advance a freight nearly equal to their value. I cannot make a new demand for this purpose; and I shall not wonder if this government, observing how badly our shipping and transporting the supplies are managed, should take that business for the future entirely into their own hands, as they have begun to do in the case of replacing the cargo of the *Marquis de Lafayette;* and, indeed, till some active, intelligent person, skilled in maritime affairs, is placed here as consul, I cannot but think it will be much better executed, and more for our advantage. Some considerable parts of that new cargo are already shipped, and the rest I hear are in great forwardness.

The very friendly disposition of this court towards us still continues, and will, I hope, continue for ever. From my own inclination, as well as in obedience to the orders of Congress, every thing in my power shall be done to cultivate that disposition; but I trust it will be remembered that the best friends may be overburdened; that, by too frequent, too large, and too importunate demands upon it, the most cordial friendship may be wearied; and, as nothing is more teasing than repeated, unexpected large demands for money, I hope the Congress will absolutely put an end to the practice of drawing on their ministers, and thereby obliging them to worry their respective courts for the means of payment. It may have otherwise very ill effects in depressing the spirit of a minister, and destroying that freedom of representation which, on many occasions, it might be proper for him to make use of.

I heartily congratulate you, sir, on your being called to the honorable and important office of President, and wish you every kind of prosperity.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to the Congress, and believe me to be, with great and sincere esteem and respect, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MIII

TO MESSRS. KORNMANN

PASSY, 21 November, 1781.

GENTLEMEN:—Enclosed is the answer you desire to the letter sent me from Königsberg. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

Passy, 21 November, 1781.

Madam:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 26th of last month; in answer to which I ought to inform you, that I was born in America, now near seventy-six years since, that I never was in Ireland till the year 1772, which was for a few weeks only, and I did not pass thence to America with any person of my name, but returned to England; nor had I ever any knowledge of the John Franklin you mention. I have exact accounts of every person of my family since the year 1555, when it was established in England, and am certain that none of them but myself since that time was ever in Ireland. The name of Franklin is common among the English of the two nations, but there is a number of different families who bear it, and who have no relation to each other. It would be a pleasure to me to discover a relation in Europe, possessing the amiable sentiments expressed in your letter. I assure you I should not disown the meanest. I should also be glad if I could give you a satisfactory account of your family; but I really know nothing of them. I have therefore not the honor of being related to them, but I have that of being, madam, yours, etc., B. Franklin.

MIV

to thomas pownall

Passy, 23 November, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor by Mr. Hobart. I caused an application to be made to Almon in behalf of Mrs. Barry, but do not learn that it is like

to meet with any success.[1] As the transaction was between yourself and him, no other person but you can claim with authority. I must therefore beg for the poor good woman's sake, that you would do something effectual in it.

I also request that you would send the copies you mention to me here, directed to the care of Mr. Bowen at Ostend; and that the plate may be packed with them.

I wish most heartily with you that this cursed war was at an end; but I despair of seeing it finished in my time. Your thirsty nation has not yet drunk enough of our blood. I am authorized to treat of peace whenever she is disposed to it; but I saw inconveniences in meeting and discoursing with you on the subject, or with any one not avowed by your ministry; having already experienced such in several instances. Mr. Hobart appeared not fully acquainted with your ideas, and as he could not communicate them I could make no judgment of them. My best wishes attend you, being with the old, long-continued esteem, dear sir, your most obedient, etc., B. Franklin.

MV

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 26 November, 1781.

Sir:—I sent forward last Saturday some packets and letters for you, which I hope got to hand in time.

[1] Mrs. Barry was the daughter of Lewis Evans, who published a geographical account of some parts of America, with an improved map. Mr. Evans had died, and his daughter, who was now at Tunis, was to receive the profits of the sale. Almon was the publisher.

Most heartily do I congratulate you on the glorious news![1] The infant Hercules in his cradle has now strangled his second serpent, and gives hopes that his future history will be answerable.

I enclose a packet which I have just received from General Washington, and which I suppose contains

[1] The "glorious news" here referred to was the capitulation of Cornwallis's army at Yorktown, on the 17th of October preceding. He and his officers were allowed to return upon parole to England, but his army were made prisoners of war. It consisted of from five to six thousand men, of whom only four thousand were fit for duty. In addition, about fifteen hundred sailors fell into the hands of the victors, who also obtained an admirable train of artillery, arms, and munitions of war. The French made prizes of a frigate, two sloops of war, transports, and other ships. The apparent loss to the British was not very great, but the two capitulations of Saratoga and Yorktown were judged to have decided the contest and the destiny of the republic, then at the verge of despair.

Schlosser says that Lord North, as is well known, only lost his self-possession once in his life, and that was when Lord George Germaine brought him the intelligence of the capitulation of Yorktown. Wraxall, in his *Memoirs of My Own Times*, Vol. II., p. 262, gives a graphic account of the effects produced by this news at court.

"During the whole month of November the concurring accounts transmitted to government, enumerating Lord Cornwallis' embarrassments and the position taken by the enemy, augmented the anxiety of the cabinet. Lord George Germaine in particular, conscious that on the prosperous or adverse termination of that expedition must hinge the fate of the American contest, his own stay in office, as well as probably the duration of the ministry itself, felt, and even expressed to his friends, the strongest uneasiness on the subject. The meeting of Parliament meanwhile stood fixed for the 27th of November. On Sunday, the 25th, about noon, official intelligence of the surrender of the British forces at Yorktown, arrived from Falmouth, at Lord George Germaine's house in Pall Mall. Lord Walsingham, who, previous to his father's (Sir William de Grey) elevation to the peerage, had been Under-Secretary of State in that department, and who was selected to second the address in the House of Peers on the subsequent Tuesday, happened to be there when the messenger brought the news. Without communicating it to any other person, Lord George, for the purpose of despatch, immediately got with him into a hackney coach and drove to Lord Stormont's residence in Portland Place. Having im-

the articles of capitulation. It is a rare circumstance, and scarce to be met with in history, that in one war two armies should be taken prisoners completely, not a man in either escaping. It is another singular circumstance, that an expedition so complex, formed of armies of different nations, and

parted to him the disastrous information, and taken him into the carriage, they instantly proceeded to the Chancellor's house in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, whom they found at home; when, after a short consultation, they determined to lay it, themselves in person, before Lord North. He had not received any intimation of the event, when they arrived at his door in Downing Street, between one and two o'clock. The First Minister's firmness, and even his presence of mind, gave way for a short time under this awful disaster. I asked Lord George afterwards how he took the communication when made to him. 'As he would have taken a ball in his breast,' replied Lord George. 'For he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly, as he paced up and down the apartment during a few minutes: "O God! it is all over!"—words which he repeated many times, under emotions of the deepest agitation and distress.'

"When the first agitation of their minds had subsided, the four ministers discussed the question, whether or not it might be expedient to prorogue Parliament for a few days; but, as scarcely an interval of forty-eight hours remained before the appointed time of assembling, and as many members of both Houses were already either arrived in London or on the road, that proposition was abandoned. It became, however, indispensable to alter, and almost to model anew, the king's speech, which had been already drawn up, and completely prepared for delivery from the throne. This alteration was therefore made without delay; and at the same time Lord Germaine, as Secretary for the American Department, sent off a despatch to his Majesty, who was then at Kew, acquainting him with the melancholy termination of Lord Cornwallis' expedition. Some hours having elapsed before these different but necessary acts of business could take place, the ministers separated, and Lord George Germaine repaired to his office in Whitehall. There he found a confirmation of the intelligence, which arrived about two hours after the first communication; having been transmitted from Dover, to which place it was forwarded from Calais, with the French account of the same event.

"I dined on that day at Lord George's; and though the information, which had reached London in the course of the morning from two different quarters, was of a nature not to admit of long concealment,

of land and sea forces, should with such perfect concord be assembled from different places by land and water, form their junction punctually, without the least retard by cross accidents of wind or weather, or interruption from the enemy; and that the army which was their object should in the meantime have the goodness to quit a situation from whence it might have escaped, and place itself in another whence an escape was impossible.

yet it had not been communicated either to me or to any individual of the company, as it might naturally have been through the channel of common report. When I got to Pall Mall, between five and six o'clock, Lord Walsingham, who likewise dined there, was the only person present except Lord George acquainted with the fact. The party, nine in number, sat down to table. I thought the master of the house appeared serious, though he manifested no discomposure. Before the dinner was finished one of his servants delivered him a letter, brought back by the messenger who had been despatched to the king. Lord George opened and perused it; then looking at Lord Walsingham, to whom he exclusively directed his observation: 'The king writes, said he, 'just as he always does, except that I observe he has omitted to mark the hour and the minute of his writing with his usual precision.' This remark, though calculated to awaken some interest, excited no comment; and while the ladies—Lord George's three daughters—remained in the room, we repressed our curiosity. But they had no sooner withdrawn than Lord George having acquainted us that from Paris information had just arrived of the old Count de Maurepas, First Minister, lying at the point of death; 'It would grieve me,' said I, 'to finish my career, however far advanced in years, were I First Minister of France, before I had witnessed the termination of this great contest between England and America.' 'He has survived to see that event,' replied Lord George, with some agitation. Utterly unsuspicious of the fact which had happened beyond the Atlantic, I conceived him to allude to the indecisive naval action fought at the mouth of the Chesapeake, early in the preceding month of September, between Admiral Graves and Count de Grasse; which, in its results, might prove most injurious to Lord Cornwallis. Under this impression, 'My meaning,' said I, 'is that if I were the Count de Maurepas, I should wish to live long enough to behold the final issue of the war in Virginia.' 'He has survived to witness it completely,' answered Lord George. 'The army has surrendered, and you may peruse the

General Greene has done wonders too in Carolina. I hear that a reinforcement was to be sent to him from the army in Virginia, and that there are hopes of his reducing Charleston. You have probably in the enclosed packet the account of his last great action. Count de Grasse sailed on the 30th with the fleet and part of the land forces. His destination is not mentioned. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

particulars of the capitulation in that paper'; taking at the same time one from his pocket, which he delivered into my hand, not without visible emotion. By his permission I read it aloud, while the company listened in profound silence. We then discussed its contents, as affecting the ministry, the country, and the war. It must be confessed that they were calculated to diffuse a gloom over the most convivial society, and that they opened a wide field for speculation."

The news of the capitulation was first communicated to Franklin by the following note from Vergennes, who received it through his agents in England:

"Je ne puis mieux Monsieur, vous témoigner ma reconnaissance des nouvelles que vous avez bien voulu me communiquer qu'en vous faisant part que M. le Duc de Lauzun est arrivé cet après-midi avec l'agréable nouvelle que les troupes combineés de France et d'Amérique ont forcé le General Cornwallis à capituler. La garnison anglaise est sortié d'Yorktown, le 29 Octobre, avec les honneurs de la guerre et a mis bas les armes comme prisonniers. Environ 6,000 hommes de troupes, 1,800 matelots ou nègres, 22 drapeaux, et 170 pièces de canon dont 75 de bronze sont les trophées qui signalent cette victoire, indépendamment d'un vaisseau de 50 canons qui a été brulé, ainsi qu'une frégate et un assez grand nombre de transports.

"Mon billet vous sera rendu à votre réveil, Monsieur, et je suis assuré qu'il vous fera partager la satisfaction que j'eprouve.

"J'ai l'honneur d'étre avec un sincère attachement, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

(Signed) "DE VERGENNES.

"Versailles, le 19 9bre, 1781,
11 heures du soir.
"M. B. FRANKLIN."

—EDITOR.

MVI

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PHILADELPHIA, 26 November, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—The Marquis de Lafayette, who has obtained leave to revisit his family for the winter, does me the honor to be the bearer of this and duplicates of two former letters to you. The degree of estimation in which he is held here you will collect from the enclosed resolutions relative to him, so that you may converse freely with him, and I doubt not that he will be able to satisfy your inquiries on many important questions relative to this country; on which account I may confine myself more to general heads than I would otherwise do.

As to intelligence, there is little of importance, the army all having gone into winter-quarters after the late glorious campaign, the enemy having been defeated on every hand. A party of about six hundred of them, who fell upon the western frontier of New York, were the last that quitted the stage, having been driven off by an inferior number of militia, with the loss of their leaders, and many privates killed, and about fifty, including the wounded, made prisoners. A body of troops is detached to the southward to reinforce General Greene, with orders to attempt Wilmington on their way, which the enemy occupy with about five hundred men, and keep up a connection with the disaffected counties in North Carolina.

We have not in a long time heard either from you or Mr. Jay, so that we are much in the dark respect-

ing the probable prospect of a negotiation this winter, or rather are led to conclude from your silence that the prospect is extremely remote; in which case all your objects will concentre in preparing for the ensuing campaign, and directing the operations as far as possible to this country. The success of the combined operations this summer will give great weight to your arguments, especially as they are such as would deserve, independent of that, the most serious attention. But, sir, you will have a difficult card to play to induce France to do what not only our but her interests essentially require. Never was there a time in which money was more necessary to us than at present. The total abolition of paper, the length of the war, the restricted commerce we have carried on for the first five years of it, the arrears of debts, and the slender thread by which public credit hangs, put it totally out of our power to make any great exertions without an immediate supply of money.

Taxation will be carried as far as it can go; but this will fall very far short of our wants. The richest nations in Europe, unable to carry on a war by taxation only, are compelled to borrow. How, then, will it be expected that a nation, which has had every difficulty to struggle with, an enemy in the heart of its country, and all its considerable towns at one time or another in their possession, a superior navy on its coasts, and the consequential ruin of its agriculture and commerce,—how, I say, can it be expected that such a nation should find resources within itself for so long and bloody a war? And

yet, in this situation, we are alarmed by our advices from you, by representations from the minister of France, by assurances from every quarter, that we must expect no further assistance in money. Surely it is not possible that France, after having done so much for us, after having brought us within view of the desired haven, should oblige us to lose the advantage of all she has done; and yet be assured that the most serious consequence may attend her stopping her hand at this critical time. Public credit, which is growing very fast, will drop to the ground. The contracts made for the ensuing campaign must be given up; the troops, who were made to expect pay in specie, will be dissatisfied; and, upon the least ill-fortune, a failure in supplies will show their discontents; recruiting will be checked, and the conclusion of the war on those advantageous terms, which one vigorous exertion next spring in this country would secure, will be postponed to a later period, when in fact all we wish, to enable us to accomplish these great objects, is less than one year's continuance of the war will cost France.

You will, therefore, show the necessity of setting our credit upon a firm basis, the prospect we have of accomplishing it, from the great confidence in the integrity and abilities of the financier, from the economy which is introduced into our departments, from the industry which money excites and which a fluctuating medium had destroyed, and from the total debility which must attend another shock to public credit.

You are perfectly acquainted, sir, with the natural

resources of the country; you know the value of our exports, and the security they afford for any debt that we may contract; in short, there are a thousand arguments on this subject which will suggest themselves to you, not one of which will you upon this occasion omit to urge, since you must be perfectly convinced of its importance in every view, both to France and to us. The Superintendent will write more fully upon this subject, which relates so particularly to his department.

I would beg leave to remind you of another want, which we depend on your representations, and good dispositions of the court of Versailles, to remove. The chase here seems to be pretty well over; the enemy, tired of running across the country, have taken to their burrows, and the whole business that remains to us is to take measures for unearthing them next spring. In order to do this, ships are absolutely necessary. The situation of New York and Charleston renders them untenable against a naval force, and extremely strong against an attack by land; besides that success in such an operation would not be decisive, since, after putting us to immense expense of men and ammunition of every kind, while they keep the command of the water, they might change their position and be as troublesome as ever. At any rate the reduction of both these places, from their distance and the difficulty of removing the men and stores, cannot be effected the same campaign without a naval force, and with it, it will be the business of a few weeks. The advantage to France, independent of her interests as they

stand connected with ours, in keeping a great naval force on this continent, is obvious.

1st. The expense to which they put the English, by obliging them to maintain an equal force at this distance from home, at four times the cost at which the French navy may be maintained in this country, which, with proper management, need not exceed what they expend even in France.

2dly. The number of seamen they employ in the transport service, being so many deducted from what might supply their navy, with the same expense as if so employed.

3dly. The protection afforded to the trade on this coast, and the prospect of capturing the enemy's victuallers, and the consequent ruin of their affairs.

4thly. But, above all, the decided advantage it will afford our combined operations, and the speedy termination of the war by an advantageous peace. It is true, France may have other objects, which may interfere with these. To this we can say nothing; she must judge for herself. All we can do is to point out what we conceive will be most useful to her as well as to us, and submit to her determination. It would be well, however, if we were apprised of it as soon as possible.

If a negotiation should open this winter, or there should be a probable prospect of it, you will do me the favor to give me the earliest advices of it. There are many delicate points on which you would like to know the sentiments of people on this side of the water, which I will endeavor to acquaint you with.

I should inform you that Congress have discharged the commission for negotiating a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, and taken that burden from Mr. Adams' shoulders; that in compliment to the Marquis de Lafayette, they have made him the bearer of a letter to the king of France, which I enclose; that in answer to your favor of the 11th of June, they have passed the enclosed resolution.

Mr. Morris will write you on this subject, and enable you to discharge the bills. Should France send a fleet next spring, it would be advantageous to have it unencumbered with such orders as may prevent its taking advantage of circumstances. This has unhappily prevented this campaign from being absolutely decisive. But neither this nor any other great object can escape your observation, bent as it is upon promoting the happiness of your country.

In order to enable you to meet the claim of the Tories to the property that has been confiscated, I am endeavoring to collect for you an accurate account of the damages wantonly done by the enemy in this country, which will at least serve to set against that claim. Congress are preparing for an active campaign. They have directed eight millions of dollars to be raised by tax. There is not, however, the least idea that this, or even one half of it, will be collected in the time specified; you will not, therefore, suffer the court to deceive themselves by hopes of exertions founded on this measure, but urge again and again the absolute necessity of supplying money. I have conversed so freely with the Marquis de Lafayette on the general state of our

politics, that I would rather refer you to him than trouble you with a longer letter on the subject.

I cannot, however, close this without desiring you to inquire whether any intercepted letters from Mr. Deane to persons in this country have been published in Europe. Rivington has given us many which are generally believed to be his. The Marquis will satisfy your inquiries about them. I am, dear sir, with sentiments of the highest respect and esteem, etc., ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MVII

TO WM. STRAHAN, ESQ.

PASSY, 4 December, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—Not remembering precisely the address of Mrs. Strange, I beg leave to request you would forward the enclosed to her, which I received under my cover from America.

I formerly sent you from Philadelphia part of an edition of *Tully on Old Age*, to be sold in London; and you put the books, if I remember right, into the hands of Mr. Becket for that purpose. Probably he may have some of them still in his warehouse, as I never had an account of their being sold. I shall be much obliged by your procuring and sending me one of them.

A strong emulation exists at present between Paris and Madrid, with regard to beautiful printing. Here a M. Didot *l'ainé* has a passion for the art, and

besides having procured the best types, he has much improved the press. The utmost care is taken of his presswork; his ink is black, and his paper fine and white. He has executed several charming editions. But the *Sallust* and the *Don Quixote* of Madrid are thought to excel them. Didot, however, improves every day, and by his zeal and indefatigable application bids fair to carry the art to a high pitch of perfection. I will send you a sample of his work when I have an opportunity.

I am glad to hear that you have married your daughter happily, and that your prosperity continues. I hope it may never meet with any interruption, having still, though at present divided by public circumstances, a remembrance of our ancient private friendship. Please to present my affectionate respects to Mrs. Strahan, and my love to your children. With great esteem and regard, I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MVIII

FROM ROBERT MORRIS

Philadelphia, 5 December, 1781.

Sir:—I was yesterday morning favored with yours of the 12th of September, enclosing third copies of your two letters of the 26th of July, also a copy of Count de Vergennes' letter to you of the 23d of August. I find by these letters that the idea I had

entertained as to the advances made by the court was not so favorable as the truth, and that the ten millions of livres, or five millions of florins, to be borrowed in Holland, will be over and above those advances. How much pleasure I receive from that circumstance you will easily conceive. It is an additional pleasure that the labor of adjusting the matters mentioned in mine of the 27th of November will be saved to you.

I am much surprised to find so large purchases made on account of the United States in Holland. If every thing else were equal, the generous conduct of France towards us has been such that I cannot but think that every possible preference ought to be given to the manufactures of that nation. But there is, in my opinion, very essential preference of a different kind. The position of Amsterdam is unfavorable, in a war with England, to a commerce with this country. France also can, and I suppose will, give convoy to the articles procured there. But I will dwell no longer on the subject, for I trust that nothing of the kind will happen hereafter.

Should the loan be obtained, you will be so kind, sir, as to deposit one million of florins with Mr. Grand, to whom I will pray you to deliver the enclosed letter. I shall, in consequence, not draw upon you for a million of livres, in favor of Messrs. Le Couteulx & Co., as I intended; and, in like manner, I beg leave to revoke what I have said on the subject of paying all balances into their hands. One million of florins you will also be pleased to deposit with the house of Grand, at Amsterdam, sending

me the precise address of both, so that I can direct my bills properly to them. Nearly one million will be necessary to pay the invoice sent. The remaining two millions I wish may be shipped from France in gold, by proper vessels of war, which, I dare say, will readily be provided by M. de Castries.

I perceive you have not written to Congress on the subjects mentioned in the letter of the Count de Vergennes of the 23d of August, which I am glad of. The more that an opinion prevails here that we must succor ourselves, the more we shall do it; and, therefore, I shall not communicate what you have said, for the present; but, as the best acknowledgment, I shall endeavor to further the operations against the common enemy, and draw forth all our resources for an early and vigorous campaign. The splendid and important success which has crowned the combined arms in Virginia is, I hope, only an earnest of what is to be done next year. These are the returns, which we shall make to the king, for the aid he so generously affords. And I have a very particular satisfaction in assuring you that throughout this country a strong attachment to the French nation is daily taking place of that blind partiality once felt for every thing which had the name of English. Let me add, for your use, a piece of mercantile information, lately communicated to me from unquestionable authority. The demand for French goods in this country has raised the prices in France from twenty to thirty per cent. The importations have reduced the prices here nearly twenty per cent, and the exchange, you already know, has been raised considerably.

I shall say nothing to you in this letter on the subject of future supplies, because I feel a conviction that you will obtain such as may be necessary. I will only repeat what I have often said, let them be early. I enclose a letter to M. de Fleury, which you will either deliver or not, as may best answer your purposes. I hope often to have the pleasure of hearing from you, and I pray you to believe me to be, with very great truth, dear sir, etc.,

ROBERT MORRIS.

MIX

TO MRS. C. EDES

PASSY, 13 December, 1781.

MADAM:—I return enclosed the letter from my friend, Mr. Bridgen, which I received from you last night. You will be so good as to acquaint him, in answer to his first question, *if any fund was established for the support of Mr. Laurens*, that, being informed about the middle of last month by a friend in London of Mr. Laurens being in want of money, I wrote on the 19th to Mr. Hodgson, a merchant in Coleman Street, in whose hands I had lodged cash for the support of prisoners, to hold one hundred pounds of it at the disposition of Mr. Laurens; and I since hear that, on a like intimation to Mr. Adams in Holland, he has ordered another one hundred pounds to be applied to the same purpose. I have never heard that any fund was established in America for the use of that gentleman; probably it has not been known there that he had need of it.

The second question, *if any measures had been taken for his relief*, will be answered by acquainting Mr. Bridgen, that the Congress passed a resolution to offer the exchange of General Burgoyne for him, and empowered me to make the offer; that Mr. Burke, having written to me in favor of his friend, General Burgoyne, on a supposition that the Congress intended to recall him, I sent a copy of the resolution to Mr. Burke, and requested he would charge himself with the negotiation. I have since heard nothing, either from Mr. Hodgson or Mr. Burke; and, as it is said a packet was lately lost between Ostend and England, I begin to fear my letters have miscarried, and shall by the first post send copies. I wish Mr. Bridgen would, however, apply to both those gentlemen, learn what has been done, and through you acquaint me with it. I beg you would assure Mr. Bridgen of my best wishes and affectionate attachment. I hope his affairs in Carolina have been settled to his mind. With much esteem, I have the honor to be, madam, yours, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—About the beginning of the year, having heard a report that Mr. Laurens was ill used, I wrote a little remonstrance to Sir Grey Cooper on the occasion; who replied by acquainting me that on inquiry he found the report to be groundless; and by sending me a letter he had received from the Lieutenant of the Tower, which assured him, in the strongest terms, that Mr. Laurens was perfectly satisfied with the treatment he received, and frequently expressed

his thankfulness for the same. This made me easy, hearing nothing afterwards to the contrary, till lately.

MX

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 14 December, 1781.

SIR:—I duly received your Excellency's favors of the 1st and 6th instant. I wrote to you by Mr. Barclay, who went from hence some days since, and I hope is with you by this time, and that he will, with your assistance, be able to settle every thing relating to the goods. I have received a long letter from Messrs. Neufville, the purport of which is, that they are willing for their part to deliver the goods to you, but that they cannot control the other owners of the ships, who have a right, by the laws and customs of Holland, to detain the goods for the damage done by Captain Gillon's refusing to sign the charter parties, and hope that I will not, on account of the conduct of the other owners, refuse to pay the bills, especially as such a refusal would be derogatory to the honor of the United States.

I may be wrong, but my present thoughts on the subject are that, if by the laws of Holland our goods may be detained in the hands of the ship-owners for the fault of Mr. Gillon, by the same laws the property of one of these owners may be detained in our hands for the fault of his partners; and that it as much concerns the honor of Holland, that our goods

should be delivered to us, as it concerns the honor of America, that we should pay for them when delivered. And I further think that, if a merchant in Holland, happening to have any of my property in his possession, may, by the laws of his country, detain the same till I pay him whatever he shall please to demand, as indemnification for an injury supposed to be done him by some other person, Holland is by no means a safe country for Americans to trade with, nor a Dutch merchant a safe depository for the property of a stranger, or to be the consignee of merchandise sent into his country.

You desire a copy of the terms on which he offered to borrow money for us. At present, I only send you an extract of the principal points, much of the writing being matter of form. The first proposition is: "That, for the security of this loan of two millions of guilders, Holland currency, *we engaged and hypothequed* [his words] to Messrs. John de Neufville & Son, of Amsterdam, or their representatives, as we do engage and hypotheque to them in the name of the whole Congress of the Thirteen United States of North America, generally, all the lands, cities, territories, and possessions of the said Thirteen States, which they may have or possess at present, and which they may have or possess in the future, with all their income, revenue, and produce, until the entire payment of this loan and the interests due thereon." My observation upon this was, that it demanded an extravagant security for a trifling sum, that it was lending little more than a guilder on each inhabitant's estate, and that it was absurd

to require a mortgage on my estate for the loan of a guilder. He answered that this was usual in all loans made in Holland to foreign states, and that the money could not otherwise be obtained.

The second proposition was (*verbatim*, as the first): "That out of the produces again through all those Thirteen States of America, shall be sent over and shipped to Europe, and chiefly, or as much as possible, to the port of Amsterdam, during the ten years of this loan, the double of one tenth part of this loan to the value of four hundred thousand guilders, which, as far as is possible, they will come to Amsterdam, shall be sold there by Messrs. John de Neufville & Son, and what goes to other ports, by their correspondents, and the money kept at their disposal for the use of Congress, at least during the first five years; and, during the last five years of this loan, one half of this money is to serve to discharge every year one tenth part of the money borrowed, engaging that, before the end of the tenth year, there will be remitted in such a manner, and left in the hands of said John de Neufville & Son, of Amsterdam, a sufficient sum of money to discharge this whole loan, with the interest due thereon."

You will observe that this article is obscurely expressed. I was obliged to demand an *éclaircissement* in conversation. The conversation was also difficult to understand, M. de Neufville's English not being then of the clearest. But from the whole, after much discourse, I gathered that we were to send over every year for the first five years in tobacco, rice, indigo, codfish, oil, etc., etc., the value of

four hundred thousand guilders, to be sold by Messrs. John de Neufville & Son for our use, on a commission of five per cent., and that the money was to remain in their hands to enable them to pay off in the last five years the principal of the loan, though one half of it was to remain in their hands till the end of the term. A subsequent article also provides that one hundred thousand guilders more should be annually sent over in produce to them, and sold, to discharge the interest.

My objections were, that if we were able to purchase produce in value two millions of guilders to lodge in the hands of Messrs. de Neufville & Son, we might use that sum in our affairs at home, and should have no occasion to borrow it in Holland; and that, if we were to buy up this value of produce with the money borrowed, and to lodge it in the hands of those gentlemen, it would be borrowing money to give them the use of it for a number of years without interest, while we were paying interest for it ourselves.

One would think this project, if it could take, might be sufficiently profitable for these gentlemen; but in another paper, part French, part English, proposed for me to sign, it was to be stipulated that, after exchanging for the new promises all those transacted by Messrs. Fizeau & Grand to the amount of forty or fifty thousand guilders, which exchange was to be made without charge; "pour le reste de cet emprunt il leur (Messrs. de Neufville et fils) sera alloué, outre les conditions d'intérest, etc., contenues dans les termes y stipulés, un per cent.

d'intérest, savoir, dix per cent. une seule fois sur les sommes qu'ils négocieront; et *en outre* deux per cent. *encore*, y compris toutes les allouances ordinaires et extraordinaires, fraix à faire, et toute commission, sans qu'ils pourront jamais rien exiger de plus à ce sujet."

Very gracious terms these! by which, after stopping a tenth part of the sum borrowed, they would be content with two per cent. upon the rest to defray charges.

Besides this, I was led to understand that it would be very agreeable to these gentlemen if, in acknowledgment of their zeal for our cause and great services in procuring this loan, they would be made by some law of Congress the general consignee of America, to receive and sell upon commission, by themselves and correspondents in the different ports and nations, all the produce of America that should be sent by our merchants to Europe. On my remarking the extravagance and impossibility of this proposition, it was modestly reduced to the following, wherein I am supposed to say and sign:

"Je veux bien encore, pour les engager (Messrs. de Neufville et fils) à suivre avec le même zèle qu'ils y ont employé jusqu'ici pour les intérests de l'Amérique, appuyer de mes recommandations leur solicitations auprès du Congrès, pour qu'il leur soit accordé pour la suite le titre de *Commissioners for trade and navigation and Treasurers of General Congress, and every private State of the Thirteen United States of North America, through the Seven United Provinces;* dont il leur sera alloué commissions regu-

lières et usitées de commerce, payement, et emprunt, tels que d'honnêtes, négociants pourront les passer sans en pretendre jamais d'autre appointement. Donné à Passy, le, etc."

By this time, I fancy, your Excellency is satisfied that I was wrong in supposing John de Neufville as much a Jew as any in Jerusalem, since Jacob was not content with any per cents, but took the whole of his brother Esau's birthright, and his posterity did the same by the Canaanites, and cut their throats into the bargain; which, in my conscience, I do not think Mr. John de Neufville has the least inclination to do by us while he can get any thing by our being alive. I am, with the greatest esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXI

TO WILLIAM ALEXANDER

Passy, 15 December, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I thank you for informing me of your intended journey. You know so well the prevailing sentiments here, and mine in particular, that it is unnecessary for me to express them; and, having never been believed on that side of the water, it would be useless. I will say, however, that I think the language you mention very proper to be held, as it is the truth; though the truth may not always be proper.[1]

[1] Mr. Alexander had written Franklin of his purpose to visit London, and in his letter had said: "I shall probably be interrogated about the disposition in this country to peace. My own idea is, that

Wishing you a good voyage and happy return to your children, I am, with great esteem, dear sir, yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

PASSY, 15 December, 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I received your favor of September 26th, containing your very judicious proposition of securing the spectators in the opera and play-houses from the danger of fire. I communicated it where I thought it might be useful. You will see by the enclosed that the subject has been under consideration here. Your concern for the security of life, even the lives of your enemies, does honor to your heart and your humanity. But what are the lives of a few idle haunters of play-houses, compared with the many thousands of worthy men and honest, industrious families butchered and destroyed by this devilish war? O that we could find some happy invention to stop the spreading of the flames, and put an end to so horrid a conflagration! Adieu, I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

you seek only your independence, and that *this* country, were that secured, will be moderate in other matters, as the object of the war does not seem to be conquest. Let me know if this is proper language. I notice that a courtly argument has been used in Parliament for continuing the continental war, that withdrawing would make you insolent, and give France exclusive advantages. Were it not proper that this were contradicted flatly? Any commissions you may have will be taken care of, and I shall be back, barring accidents, in three weeks."—EDITOR.

MXIII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

PASSY, 19 December, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I duly received yours of the 11th, by young M. de Neufville, enclosing the pamphlets, of which I gave one the next day to M. Boudoin. It was so long since we had heard from you that we feared you were sick.

I enclose sundry American newspapers, out of which perhaps something may be drawn for your printers. There are the orders of General Greene after the battle of Eutaw Springs, by which it appears that the militia behaved to general satisfaction. There are also the proceedings relating to Colonel Isaac Hayne, which it may be well to publish, as probably we may soon hear that General Greene, according to his promise in his proclamation, has hanged some of the British officers in retaliation; and the knowledge of these proceedings may operate in his justification. In the German papers there are two dialogues, of which you can best judge whether the printing of them in Germany may not have some little effect in opposition to Faucitt's *recruiting*.[1] I suppose this letter may find you at Amsterdam, and therefore I send it under cover to Mr. Adams, with the usual compliments of the approaching season.

B. FRANKLIN.

[1] William Faucitt was the person employed by the British government to procure troops in Germany for the American service.

MXIV

TO MISS MARTHA LAURENS

PASSY, 29 December, 1781.

MADAM:—I received your very sensible letter of the 14th past. Your brother, Colonel Laurens, being here when I received the former, I informed him of the steps I had then taken respecting your good father, and requested him to answer your letter for me. I did suppose he had done it; but his great and constant occupation while here might occasion his omitting it. The purport was that, on a report of your father's being harshly treated, I wrote in his behalf to an old friend, Sir Grey Cooper, Secretary of the Treasury, complaining of it. His answer was that he had inquired, and found the report groundless, and he sent me enclosed a letter he received from the Lieutenant of the Tower, assuring him that Mr. Laurens was treated with great kindness, was very sensible of it, thankful for it, and frequently expressed his satisfaction. On this I became more easy on his account. But, a little before I received your letter, I had one from Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, who is connected with the family of Mr. Manning, which informed me that Mr. Laurens was really in want of necessaries, and desired to know if any provision was made for his subsistence. I wrote immediately to Mr. Hodgson, in whose hands I had lodged some money, requesting him to hold one hundred pounds of it at the disposition of Mr. Laurens, and to acquaint Mr. Vaughan with it.

About this time I received two letters, one from

Mr. Burke, member of Parliament, complaining that his friend, General Burgoyne, in England on his parole, was reclaimed and recalled by Congress, and requesting I would find some means of permitting him to remain. The other was from the Congress, enclosing a resolve that empowered me to offer General Burgoyne in exchange for Mr. Laurens. Perceiving by Mr. Burke's letter that he was very desirous of obtaining his friend's liberty, and having no immediate intercourse with the British ministry, I thought I could not do better than to enclose the resolve in my answer to his letter, and request him to negotiate the exchange. When I received yours I was in expectation of having soon an answer from Mr. Burke and Mr. Hodgson, which would enable me to give you more satisfactory information. I therefore delayed writing to you from post to post till I should hear from them, and fearing from the length of time that my letters had miscarried, I sent copies of them.

It is but yesterday that I received an answer from Mr. Hodgson, dated the 21st instant, in which he writes me: "I received your favor of the 19th ultimo, and immediately acquainted Mr. Vaughan with your directions concerning the supplying Mr. Laurens. He has been acquainted therewith; but hitherto no application has been made to me for the money; whenever it is, you may be assured it shall be complied with." No answer has come to my hands from Mr. Burke; but I see, by the newspaper Mr. Hodgson sends me, that he has endeavored to execute the commission. I enclose that paper for your satisfaction,

together with a copy of your father's petition to Parliament, on which I do not find that they have yet come to any result; but, observing that he makes no complaint in that petition of his being pinched in the article of subsistence, I hope that part of our intelligence from London may be a mistake. I shall, however, you may depend, leave nothing undone that is in my power to obtain his release, and I assure you that the thought of the pleasure it must afford a child, whose mind is of so tender a sensibility, and filled with such true filial duty and affection, will be an additional spur to my endeavors. I suppose Mr. Adams has informed you that he has ordered another hundred pounds sterling to be paid to Mr. Laurens, and I hope you will soon have the happiness of hearing that he is at liberty. With very great regard, I have the honor to be, madam. etc., B. Franklin.

MXV

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES

Versailles, 31 December, 1781.

Sir:—I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me the 27th instant. I shall not enter into an examination of the successive variations and augmentations of your demands on me for funds to meet your payments. I shall merely remark that whenever you shall consider yourself fully authorized to dispose of the proceeds of the Dutch loan, on behalf of Congress, I will propose to M. de

Fleury to supply you with the million required, as soon as it shall have been paid into the royal treasury. But I think it my duty, sir, to inform you that if Mr. Morris issues drafts on this same million, I shall not be able to provide for the payment of them, and shall leave them to be protested. I ought also to inform you that there will be nothing more supplied than the million above mentioned; and if the drafts which you have already accepted exceed that sum, it must be for you to contrive the means of meeting them. I shall make an exception only in favor of those of Mr. Morris, provided they shall not exceed the remainder of the Dutch loan, after deducting the million, which shall be placed at your disposal, and the expenses of the loan. I have the honor to be, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MXVI

OF THE PAPER MONEY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Much conversation has arisen lately on the subject of this money, and few persons being well acquainted with the nature of it, you may possibly oblige many of your readers by the following account of it.

When Great Britain commenced the present war upon the colonies, they had neither arms nor ammunition, nor money to purchase them or to pay soldiers. The new government had not immediately

the consistence necessary for collecting heavy taxes; nor would taxes that could be raised within the year during peace have been sufficient for a year's expense in time of war; they therefore printed a quantity of paper bills, each expressing to be of the value of a certain number of Spanish dollars, from one to thirty; with these they paid, clothed, and fed their troops, fitted out ships, and supported the war during five years against one of the most powerful nations of Europe.

The paper thus issued passed current in all the internal commerce of the United States at par with silver during the first year; supplying the place of the gold and silver formerly current, but which was sent out of the country to purchase arms, etc., or to defray expenses of the army in Canada; but the great number of troops necessary to be kept on foot to defend a coast of near five hundred leagues in length from an enemy who, being masters at sea, could land troops where they pleased, occasioned such a demand for money and such frequent additional emissions of new bills, that the quantity became much greater than was wanted for the purposes of commerce; and, the commerce being diminished by the war, the surplus quantity of cash was by that means also proportionally augmented.

It has been long and often observed that when the current money of a country is augmented beyond the occasions for money, as a medium of commerce, its value as money diminishes. Its interest is reduced, and the principal sinks, if some means are not found to take off the surplus quantity. Sil-

ver may be carried out of the country that produces it, and thereby prevent too great fall of its value in that country. But, when by this means it grows more plentiful in all other countries, nothing prevents its sinking in value. Thus within three hundred years since the discovery of gold in America, and the vast quantities of gold and silver imported from thence and spread over Europe and the rest of the world, those metals have sunk in value four fifths—that is, five ounces of silver will not purchase more labor now than an ounce would have done before that discovery.

Had Spain been able to confine all that treasure within its own territories, silver would probably have been there of no more value by this time than iron or lead. The exportation has kept its value on a level with its value in other parts of the world. Paper money not being easily received out of the country that makes it, if the quantity becomes excessive, the depreciation is quicker and greater.

Thus the excessive quantities which necessity obliged the Americans to issue for continuing the war, occasioned a depreciation of value, which, commencing towards the end of 1776, has gone on augmenting, till, at the beginning of the present year, fifty, sixty, and as far as seventy dollars in paper were reckoned not more than equal to one dollar in silver, and the prices of all things rose in proportion.

Before the depreciation commenced, the Congress, fearing it, stopped for a time the emission of new bills, and resolved to supply their occasions by borrowing. Those who lent them the paper money at

that time and until March, 1778, fixed their property and prevented its depreciation, the interest being regularly paid by bills of exchange on France, which supports the value of the principal sums lent.

These loans not being sufficient, the Congress were forced to print more bills, and depreciation proceeded. The Congress would borrow no more on the former conditions of paying the interest in French money at Paris, but great sums were offered and lent them on the terms of being paid the interest and repaid the principal in the same bills in America.

These loans in some degree lessened, but did not quite take away, the necessity of new emissions, so that it at length arrived at the excessive difference between the value of paper and silver that is above mentioned.

To put an end to this evil, which destroyed all certainty in commerce, the Congress first resolved to diminish the quantity gradually by taxes, which, though nominally vastly great, were really less heavy than they appeared to be, and were readily paid. By these taxes fifteen millions of Spanish dollars, of the two hundred millions extant, are to be brought in monthly and burnt. This operation will destroy the whole quantity, to wit, two hundred millions, in about fourteen months. Thirty millions have already been so destroyed.

To prevent in the meantime the farther progress of the depreciation, and give some kind of determinate value to the paper, it was ordained that, for every sum of forty dollars payable by any person as tax, he might discharge himself by paying one dollar

in silver. Whether this expedient will produce the effect intended or not, experience and time must discover.

The general effect of the depreciation among the inhabitants of the States has been this, that it has operated as a *gradual tax* upon them, their business has been done and paid for by the paper money, and every man has paid his share of the tax according to the time he retained any of the money in his hands, and to the depreciation within that time. Thus it has proved a tax on money, a kind of property very difficult to be taxed in any other mode; and it has fallen more equally than many other taxes, as those people paid most who, being richest, had most money passing through their hands.

With regard to the paper money or bills borrowed by the Congress, it appears by the above account to be under two different descriptions.

First, the quantity of bills borrowed before the depreciation, the interest of which in silver was to be and is paid. The principal of this sum is considered as equal in value to so many dollars of silver as were borrowed in paper, and will be paid in silver accordingly.

Secondly, the quantities of bills borrowed in different stages of the depreciation down to the present time. These sums are, by a resolution of Congress, to be repaid in silver according to the value they were of in silver at the time they were lent, and the interest is to be paid at the same rate. Thus those lenders have their property secured from the loss by depreciation subsequent to the time of their loan.

All the inhabitants are satisfied and pleased with this arrangement, their public debt being by this means reduced to a small sum. And the new paper money, which bears interest, and for the payment of which solid funds are provided, is actually in credit equal to real silver.

If any persons living in distant countries have, through their absence from their property in America, suffered loss by not having it timely fixed in the several loans above mentioned, it is not doubted but that, upon an application to Congress stating the case, they will meet with redress.

The real money used in the United States is French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English coins, gold and silver. The most common is Spanish milled dollars, worth five livres five sols tournois.

The nominal money is generally paper, reckoned in pounds, shillings, and pence, of different value in the different States when compared with real money, and that value often changing, so that nothing certain can be said of it. Everywhere the accounts are kept in nominal pounds, shillings, and pence, the pound containing twenty shillings, and the shilling twelve pence, whatever may be the real value.

Bills of exchange are frequently drawn on Europe; the rate of exchange differing in different States, and fluctuating in the same State, occasioned by the greater or less plenty of bills or of demand for others; they are commonly drawn at thirty days' sight.

The usages in buying and selling merchandises are much the same as in Europe, except that in Virginia the planter carries his tobacco to magazines, where it

is inspected by officers, who ascertain its quality and give receipts expressing the quantity. The merchants receive these receipts in payment for goods, and afterwards draw the tobacco out of the magazines for exportation. Weights and measures are uniform in all the States, following the standard of Great Britain.

Money is lent either upon bond or on mortgage, payable in a year with interest. The interest differs in the different States from five to seven per cent.

Goods are generally imported on eighteen months' credit from Europe, sold in the country at twelve months' credit.

Billets or promissory notes, payable to the creditor or order, are in use, and demandable when due, as well as accepted bills of exchange, without any days of grace, but by particular favor.

MXVII

TO MESSRS. HENRY ROYLE, THOMAS HELT, JOSEPH HEATHCOTE, JOHN ROWBOTHAM, AND JOHN SCHOFIELD, MANUFACTURERS AT HATHERTON, NEAR STOCKPORT.

PASSY, 4 January, 1782.

GENTLEMEN:—I received the propositions you did me the honor to address to me by the hand of Mr. Wild.

There is no doubt but that a body of sober, industrious, and ingenious artisans, men of honest and religious principles, such as you and your friends are described to be, would be a valuable acquisition to

any country; and I am certain you would meet with a kind and friendly reception in Pennsylvania, and be put into possession of all the rights and privileges of free citizens; but neither that government nor any other in America that I know of has ever been at any public expense to augment the number of its inhabitants. All who are established there have come at their own charge. The country affords to strangers a good climate, fine, wholesome air, plenty of provisions, good laws, just and *cheap* government, with all the liberties, civil and religious, that reasonable men can wish for. These inducements are so great, and the number of people in all nations of Europe who wish to partake of them is so considerable, that if the States were to undertake transporting people at the expense of the public, no revenues that they have would be sufficient. Having therefore no orders or authority either from the Congress or the State of Pennsylvania to procure settlers or manufacturers by engaging to defray them [*sic*], I cannot enter into the contract proposed in your second article. The other articles would meet with no difficulty. Men are not forced there into the public service, and a special law might easily be obtained to give you a property for seven years in the useful inventions you may introduce.

You will do well to weigh maturely the following considerations. If you can establish yourselves there during the war, it is certain that your manufactures will be much more profitable, as they sell at very high prices now, owing to the difficulty and risk of transporting them from Europe; but then

your passages also will be more expensive, and your risk greater of having your project ruined, by being taken, stripped, and imprisoned. If you wait till a peace, you will pass much cheaper and more securely, and you have a better chance of settling yourselves and posterity in a comfortable and happy situation. On these points your prudence must determine. If I were to advise, I should think it rather most prudent to wait for a peace; and then to victual a vessel in some port of Ireland, where it can be done cheaply, and to which you might easily pass from Liverpool. There are, I understood, some apprehensions that your ministers may procure a law to restrain the emigration of manufacturers; but I think that, weak and wicked as they are, and tyrannical as they are disposed to be, they will hardly venture upon an act that shall make a prison out of England, to confine men for no other crime but that of being useful and industrious, and to discourage the learning of useful mechanic arts, by declaring that as soon as a man is master of his business he shall lose his liberty and become a prisoner for life, while they suffer their idle and extravagant gentry to travel and reside abroad at their pleasure, spending the incomes of their estates, racked from their laborious, honest tenants, in foreign follies, and among French and Italian whores and fiddlers. Such a law would be too glaringly unjust to be borne with.

I wish you success in what you may resolve to undertake; and you will find me ever your assured friend and humble servant. B. Franklin.

MXVIII

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PHILADELPHIA, 7 January, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—As it does not appear improbable that the humiliation and misfortunes of Great Britain may produce the same sentiments which a spirit of moderation dictates to the other belligerent powers, and lead her to concur with them in their wishes for peace, it cannot be improper to acquaint you with the objects America most wishes to attain, and to furnish you with the arguments on which they found their claim to them. For such is the confidence, not only in the justice of his most Christian Majesty, but in his friendship, that they firmly persuade themselves that he will not only preserve for them their undoubted rights, but that he will even go so far as to procure for them those advantages they may reasonably demand on the close of a successful war, and I am perfectly satisfied that the loose hints that a detail of their sentiments may afford you and our other Commissioners, will be strengthened and improved by your lights in such manner as to come before his Majesty in the most advantageous form.

The first point of discussion will be the *limits of the United States*. The instructions given to Mr. Adams [1] explain the wishes of Congress on that subject; nor can they admit of many doubts, except so far as they relate to our southern extent, the boundary between us and Canada being very well ascertained by grants, charters, proclamations, and other

[1] See *Secret Journal of Congress*, Vol. II., p. 225.

acts of government, and more particularly by the settlements of people who are engaged in the same cause with us, and who have the same rights with the rest of the subjects of the United States.

Our western and northwestern extent will probably be contested with some warmth, and the reasoning on that subject be deduced from general principles, and from proclamations and treaties with the Indians.

The subject is undoubtedly intricate and delicate; yet, upon candid investigation, I believe it will appear that our extension to the Mississippi is founded in justice, and that our claims are at least such as the events of the war give us a right to insist upon. Your situation furnishing you amply with the various documents on which Great Britain founded her claim to all the country east of the Mississippi previous to the treaty of Paris, I will not trouble you with references to them, which would at any rate be imperfect from the want which prevails here of books and papers. Taking it for granted that the king of Great Britain was entitled to that extent of country (which he at least cannot contravene), it only remains to examine how far he considers it as within the limits of some of the United States, because he can no more pretend to abridge those limits, than claim any other right of which the United States are in possession.

His idea of these limits is apparent from charters granted by the crown; and, from recent grants made by its representatives in several of the States, it appears that they considered their authority to grant

lands to the westward, as coextensive with the right of Great Britain, unless they were restricted by their interference with other governments. Upon this principle the servants of the crown in New York granted land on the borders of Lake Erie to the westward of Niagara. And Virginia, even after the proclamation of 1763, patented considerable tracts upon the Ohio, far beyond the Appalachian Mountains. It is true, the several governments were prohibited at different times from granting lands beyond certain limits, but these were clearly temporary restrictions, which the policy of maintaining a good understanding with the natives dictated, and were always broken through after a short period, as is evinced by the grants above mentioned, made subsequent to the proclamation in 1763. And, indeed, the proclamation itself furnishes a substantial argument of the opinion of Britain, with respect to the right which some of the States had to extend to the westward of the limits it prescribed; otherwise it would not have been necessary to prohibit their governors from granting, as their patents would, in such cases, have been invalid, and themselves subjected to the censure of their master, upon whom they were dependent.

Unless, therefore, these proclamations absolutely destroyed the right, they must be considered as proofs of its existence at least, and after they were issued. The slightest examination of them shows that they did not take away, but restrained, an existing right; and the subsequent grants by the governors evidence that they were, as is before

asserted, mere temporary restrictions. The same reasoning applies to the treaty at Fort Stanwix, and to other agreements taken from treaties with the Indians. Strong evidence in our favor is also found in the map made by the king's geographer, in which Virginia and the Carolinas are laid down as extending to the Mississippi, shortly after the last war. Arguments may be drawn against us by the Quebec Bill; but as this is one of the laws that occasioned the war, to build any thing upon it would be to urge one wrong in support of another. But this matter may perhaps be seen in a different light, and our pretensions placed upon a more extensive basis, by recurring to general principles, and asking whence Great Britain derived her right to the waste lands in America. Evidently from the allegiance which a subject is supposed to carry with him wherever he goes, even though he dislikes his constitution and seeks one that pleases him better. Upon this principle the oppressed subjects of Great Britain, seeking freedom in the wilds of America, were supposed to extend to it the sovereignty of the kingdom they had left. The rights of the king of Great Britain, then, to America were incident to his right of sovereignty over those of his subjects that settled America and explored the lands he claims. For the idea of right derived from mere discovery, and the vain ceremony of taking possession without planting and continuing that possession, is now fully exploded. If, then, we admit what is necessary to our independence, that the right of sovereignty over the people of America is forfeited, it must follow that

all rights founded in that sovereignty are forfeited with it, and that, upon our setting up a new sovereign in America, the rights which the first claimed, as such, devolve upon the second. Upon this principle Great Britain is left without a foot of land in America beyond the limits of those governments which acknowledge her jurisdiction.

It is in vain to say that the king of Great Britain holds these back lands by a cession from some other powers; since those cessions were grounded upon a prior claim, derived through the people of America, and only served to confirm the right which they gave the king of Great Britain while he was their sovereign, and which he loses with his sovereignty over them. This mode of reasoning is warranted by the practice Great Britain uniformly held, of treating with the Indian nations through their American governors, who have frequently executed with them the most solemn acts, and sometimes extended the king's protection to the nations who occupy the waste lands, which are the subject of our present claim. The expense of retaining these in friendship almost always devolved upon the respective States, who, till lately, particularly in New York, voted the sums necessary to support smiths among them, and to procure the presents which were annually made them. From hence, then, it follows that, if the king of Great Britain has any right over the back lands in America, it must be as king of the people of America; ceasing to be king of those people, his right also ceases. If he has no right over the back lands, but merely as protector of the savage nations

that inhabit them, that connection and duty also devolve upon us, since they evidently claimed that protection from him as king of the colonies, and through the governors of those colonies and not as sovereign of a country three thousand miles from them. This country having chosen a new sovereign, they may rightfully claim its protection.

There is some reason to believe that Great Britain considered their rights in many instances as extending no further than their right of pre-emption and protection, as may be inferred from passages in the negotiations for a peace with France in the year 1761, referred to in the margin. This suggests a new idea, which, however, I am not warranted by an act of Congress in mentioning, and therefore you will only consider it as the sentiment of an individual. If the mediators should not incline to admit our claim, but determine on restricting our limits, either by the extent of our grants, the course of the mountains, the sources of the rivers, or any other of those arbitrary rules that must be sought for when solid principles are relinquished, perhaps it would be difficult to bring them to agree that the country beyond those limits belongs to the nations which inhabit it; that it should enjoy its independence under the guaranty of France, Spain, Great Britain, and America, and be open to the trade of those whose lands border upon them.

This, though restrictive of our rights, would free us from the well grounded apprehensions that the vicinity of Great Britain and her command of the savages would give us. They already possess Canada

and Nova Scotia; should that immense territory, which lies upon the rear of the States, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, be acknowledged to be vested in Great Britain, it will render our situation truly hazardous. The lands, as you know, are infinitely better than those on the coast; they have an open communication with the sea by the rivers St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, and with each other by those extensive inland seas with which America abounds. They will be settled with the utmost rapidity from Europe, but more particularly from these States. Attachment to the government, freedom from taxes, a prospect of bettering their fortunes, and the fertility of the soil, will invite numbers to leave us. This co-operating with the leaven of dissatisfaction, which will continue to work here for many years, may produce the most dangerous effects, especially upon the Southern States, which will, from the nature of their soil and husbandry, be thinly settled for many years, while the lands which lie near them beyond the mountains will soon be filled with a hardy race of people inimical to them, who to their own strength will be enabled to join that of the savages subject to their command.

If it is an object with the maritime powers to lessen the power, and by that means diminish the dangerous dominion, that Great Britain has in some measure usurped over the ocean, they must prevent her possessing herself of the country in question, since, besides the whole fur and peltry trade that she will thereby engross, the demands of this great

country will give a new spring to her manufactures, which, though the Floridas should be ceded to Spain, will find their way into it by the River St. Lawrence, and through the numerous lakes and rivers which communicate with it. Add to this, that settlements are already formed beyond the Appalachian Mountains by people who acknowledge the United States, which not only give force to our claims, but render a relinquishment of their interest highly impolitic and unjust.

These, and a variety of other reasons, which will suggest themselves to you and the gentlemen joined in the commission with you, will doubtless be urged in such terms as to convince the court of France that our mutual interests conspire to keep Great Britain from any territory on this continent beyond the bounds of Canada. Should the Floridas be ceded to Spain, she will certainly unite with you on this point, as the security of that cession will depend upon its success.

The *fisheries* will probably be another source of litigation, not because our rights are doubtful, but because Great Britain has never paid much attention to rights which interfere with her views.

The arguments on which the people of America found their claim to fish on the Banks of Newfoundland arise, first, from their having once formed a part of the British empire, in which state they always enjoyed, as fully as the people of Britain themselves, the right of fishing on those Banks. They have shared in all the wars for the extension of that right, and Britain could with no more justice have

excluded them from the enjoyment of it (even supposing that one nation could possess it to the exclusion of another), while they formed a part of that empire, than they could exclude the people of London or Bristol. If so, the only inquiry is, How have we lost this right? If we were tenants in common with Great Britain while united with her, we still continue so, unless by our own act we have relinquished our title. Had we parted with mutual consent, we should doubtless have made partition of our common rights by treaty. But the oppressions of Great Britain forced us to a separation (which must be admitted, or we have no right to be independent) and it cannot certainly be contended that those oppressions abridged our rights, or gave new ones to Britain. Our rights, then, are not invalidated by this separation, more particularly as we kept up our claim from the commencement of the war, and assigned the attempt of Great Britain to exclude us from the fisheries as one of the causes of our recurring to arms.

The second ground upon which we place our right to fish on the Banks of Newfoundland, provided we do not come within such distance of the coasts of other powers as the law of nations allows them to appropriate, is the right which nature gives to all mankind to use its common benefit, so far as not to exclude others. The sea cannot in its nature be appropriated; no nation can put its mark upon it. Though attempts have sometimes been made to set up an empire over it, they have been considered as unjust usurpations, and resisted as such, in turn, by every

maritime nation in Europe. The idea of such empire is now fully exploded by the best writers.

The whale fishery, in every sea, and even upon the coasts of princes who do not exercise it themselves, is considered as a common right, and is enjoyed by those nations that choose to pursue it. The cod fishery, upon the Dogger Bank, and other parts of the European seas, is claimed exclusively by no nation. The herring fishery is carried on daily by the Dutch on the coast of England; and, if the Banks of Newfoundland are not equally common, it is because some nations have relinquished their rights, and others find it impossible to exercise them, for want of harbors to receive their vessels, or shores to dry their fish on.

When we say we are willing to exercise it under these inconveniences, there can certainly be no further dispute about our right, and the only remaining questions will be the distance that we ought to keep from the shores possessed by the enemy; though, strictly speaking, from our first principle, we have a common right in them.

This subject is treated so much at large by Grotius and Vattel that I do not think it necessary to detail arguments, which, though urged by people here from their feelings, you will find much better stated there. Give me leave, however, to urge some that may arise from our particular circumstances. All the New England States are much interested in this point; the State of Massachusetts more particularly; it has no staple; it does not raise its own bread; its principal commerce consisted, before the war, in fish,

which it supplied to the rest of the continent in exchange for rice, flour, etc., and to the West Indies for rum, sugar, and molasses. It shipped little to Europe: first, because it could not fish so cheap as the people of England; secondly, because their fish were not so well cured in general, owing to their fishing at improper seasons, and to their using salt which is said to be of a more harsh nature than what the European vessels bring out with them. Should this State and New Hampshire, which is almost in similar circumstances, be excluded from the fisheries, they must be reduced to great distress. It will be impossible for them to pay for the necessaries they must receive from abroad. They will see with pain their sister States in the full enjoyment of the benefits which will result from their independence, while their own commerce is checked and their State impoverished. They will consider their interests as sacrificed to the happiness of others, and can hardly forbear to foster that discontent which may be productive of disunion and the most dangerous divisions.

An idea has also gone forth, and it is fomented by the disaffected, that France wishes, from interested views, to monopolize the fisheries; or, at least, to exclude all other competitors but Great Britain. Those who have attended to the disinterested conduct of France during the war oppose to this sentiment the honor and good faith of their ally, the little interest that he can have in excluding a people from a right which would not interfere with his, since France does little more than supply herself, and the

New England fishery, for the most part, only supplies the continent and islands of America. They see the care with which France has endeavored to cultivate a good understanding between that kingdom and these States, and they are persuaded so inconsiderable an object will not be put in competition with the harmony which ought to subsist between them, or administer food to those unworthy jealousies. And so much does this sentiment prevail in Congress, that their prospects have not induced them to alter your instructions: more particularly as they have received through the minister of France assurances that his Majesty was pleased with the proofs Congress had given him of their confidence, and that he would in no event make any sacrifices of their essential interests which necessity should not compel him to do; that he had no reason to apprehend, from the events of the war, that such necessity would exist. These events have become so much more favorable since the date of the letter which contained these assurances, that Congress persuade themselves his Majesty will not be driven to make sacrifices equally painful to him and injurious to us; but that, as we owe our success in war to his magnanimity and generosity, we may be equally indebted to his justice and firmness for an honorable peace.

It is not improbable that Great Britain will endeavor to make some stipulations *in favor of their American partisans*, who have been banished the country, or whose property has been forfeited. You will doubtless be sensible of the inconvenience and

danger to which their return will subject us, and the injustice of restoring to them what they have so justly forfeited, while no compensation is made to us for the loss of property and the calamities they have occasioned.

There can be little doubt that every society may rightfully banish from among them those who aim at its subversion, and forfeit the property which they can only be entitled to by the laws, and under the protection of the society which they attempt to destroy. Without troubling you, therefore, on the point of right, I will just mention a few of the consequences that would result from a stipulation in their favor.

In the first place it will excite general dissatisfaction and tumults. They are considered here as the authors of the war. Those who have lost relations and friends by it, those who have been insulted by them while starving in prisons and prison-ships, those who have been robbed and plundered, or who have had their houses burned and their families ill-treated by them, will, in despite of all law or treaties, avenge themselves, if the real or supposed authors of these calamities ever put themselves in their power; nor will the government be able to prevent what the feeling of the body of the people will justify.

Should they be permitted to reside among us, they will neglect no means to injure and subvert our Constitution and government, and to sow dissensions among us in order to pave the way for the old system. They will be dangerous partisans of the enemy, equally unfriendly to France and to us, and

will show themselves such upon every occasion. To restore their property in many instances is now become impossible. It has been sold from hand to hand; the money arising from it has been sunk by depreciation in the public treasury. To raise the value by taxes, or to wrest the lands from the hands of the proprietors, is equally unjust and impossible. Many of the very people who would demand the restitution have grown rich by the spoil and plunder of this country. Many others, who were beggars at the beginning of this war, owe their present affluence to the same cause.

So that at least the account between the two nations should be liquidated before any claim can be set up by the aggressors. How far it will be possible to obtain a compensation for the injuries wantonly done by the enemy, you will be best able to judge; be assured that it is anxiously desired.

Give me leave to mention to you the necessity of stipulating for the safe delivery of all records and other papers of a public and private nature which the enemy have possessed themselves of; particularly of the records of New York, which Mr. Tryon sent to England; and the private papers of many gentlemen of the law in different parts of the continent, by which the rights of individuals may be materially affected.

Thus, sir, I have touched upon the principal points that America wishes to attain in the peace which must end this bloody war. Perhaps in so doing I have given both you and myself unnecessary trouble, since I have urged nothing but what your own

knowledge of the country, and that of the other gentlemen in the commission, would have suggested to you. However, conceiving that circumstances might render it necessary for you to declare that you spoke nothing more than the prevailing sentiments of your court, this letter will serve to vouch for the assertion.

Should the Floridas be ceded to Spain, as there is nothing Congress have more at heart than to maintain that friendly intercourse with them which this revolution has happily begun, it will be essential to fix their limits precisely, for which purpose the instructions to Mr. Adams will serve as your directions.

Affairs here are in the same state that they were when I last wrote, except that the enemy in South Carolina have called in all their outposts and shut themselves up in Charleston, where they will be closely invested when General St. Clair joins, which must have happened about the last of December. The brilliant expedition to St. Eustatia does the highest honor to the Marquis de Bouillé and the French nation. I flatter myself that it will be of singular use in Mr. Adams' negotiations. I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MXIX

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 9 January, 1782.

SIR:—I have long feared that by our continually worrying the ministry here with successive after-

clap demands for more and more money, we should at length tire out their patience. Bills are still coming in quantities drawn on Mr. Jay, Mr. Laurens, and Mr. Adams. Spain and Holland have afforded little towards paying them; and recourse has therefore been had to me. You will see by the enclosed letter the situation I am at length brought into. With the million mentioned, I shall be able to pay till the end of February, when, if I can get no more money, I must stop. I therefore give you this notice, that provision may be made in time for discharging the protests with honor. The friendly disposition towards us continues, but we should take care not to impose too much upon friendship. Let us exert vigorously our own strength. I see yet no prospect of peace this summer. The expense of the war to France itself is heavy; and we have had of her this last year more than twenty millions.

I am ever, with greatest esteem, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MXX

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 15 January, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I received a few days since your favor of the 2d instant,[1] in which you tell me that

[1] FROM DAVID HARTLEY

London, 2 January, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—I have received the favor of yours of the 15th of December, by Mr. Alexander. I most heartily join with you in

Mr. Alexander had informed you "America was disposed to enter into a separate treaty with Great Britain." I am persuaded that your strong desire

the wish that we could find some means to stop the spreading flames of this *devilish war*. I will not despair. The communications, which he has imparted to me from you have revived my hope of peace. I laid them before the minister immediately. We are at a suspense for the present upon a very material preliminary. I did intend writing to you at the present pause, that we might make our ground good as we go on; but an accident which has happened obliges me to do it without delay. For, having had a most essential question transmitted to me from Lord North for explanation, when I would have applied to Mr. Alexander, I could not hear of him; and now I find that he has left his hotel these four or five days, and, his return being uncertain, I must apply to you. I will state to you what has passed.

Upon my first interview with Mr. Alexander, he told me that the late events would make no difference in the prospect of peace; that America had no other wish than to see the termination of this war; that no events would make them unreasonable on that subject, which sentiments likewise your letter expresses; and that no formal recognition of independence would be required. I thought this a very fair opening; but the next point which he explained to me seemed to be still more material towards peace, viz., that America was disposed to enter into a separate treaty with Great Britain, and their allies were disposed to consent to it. I believe that it has been the unfortunate union of common cause between America and France which has for the last three years turned aside the wish of the people of England for peace. I verily believe (so deep is the jealousy of England and France) that this country would fight for a straw to the last man, and the last shilling, rather than be dictated to by France. I therefore consider this as the greatest rub out of the way. I have often argued this point with you upon former occasions, having at all times foreseen that it would be the greatest rub in the road to peace, and I have often stated it to you as an act of *justice* due to America from her allies, not to drag her through a war of European resentments and jealousies, beyond her original views and engagements; and, moreover, I think the separation of the causes in the negotiation promises much the shortest road to a general peace.

Upon Mr. Alexander's opening thus much to me, I told him I would apply for the earliest opportunity of laying these matters before the minister. Accordingly on Friday morning, December the 21st, I applied, through the means of the Earl of Guildford, father to Lord North, a nobleman of a most respectable character, advanced in years,

for peace has misled you, and occasioned your greatly misunderstanding Mr. Alexander; as I think it scarce possible he should have asserted a thing *so*

and attached by every possible tie to a son now in the most arduous situation. I therefore requested the favor through his hands, as giving me the most conciliatory access to the minister, to whom I was preparing to make an application for peace. After the appointment was made with Lord North for Friday evening, I returned to Mr. Alexander, to consider the specific manner and terms in which I should make my application. It had occurred to me, from what Mr. Alexander had stated to me, that the Conciliatory Bill,* which I had moved in the last Parliament, on the 27th of June, 1780, would still serve as a foundation to proceed upon; I therefore carried it with me.

He told me that he and you knew the sense of the bill very well, and that it would be entirely consonant to your sentiments that I should state it to Lord North, as drawing an outline for a negotiation of peace. However, to avoid all errors, I read the bill through to him, and explained the view of each clause, viz., the style of *Provinces of North America*, a general phrase, to avoid any term denoting dependence or independence; the truce for an indefinite term; the articles for intercourse for ten years certain; to restore an amicable correspondence, and to abate animosities; the suspension of certain acts of Parliament, to avoid every possible question of dependence or independence; and to finish the work by a ratification of each article of intercourse as agreed to, thereby to prevent all possible return of war. I compared the articles of intercourse for a short term, and their ratification into a permanent peace, to a well known mode of proceeding in the laws of England, by lease and release, from temporary to perpetual amity and peace.

Upon these grounds I took my commission from him for Lord North, viz., the question of dependence or independence *sub silentio*, a separate treaty with America, and to state the Conciliatory Bill of June, 1780, as the outline of negotiation. I saw Lord North in the evening, and stated the foregoing propositions to him as I have now stated them to you. After having stated the compromise *sub silentio* and the separate treaty, I left with Lord North the copy of the bill of June, 1780, together with a paper, entitled "Conciliatory Propositions," as explanatory of that bill, both enclosed with this. The next morning, viz., Saturday, December the 22d, I saw Mr. Alexander, and reported to him what I had stated to Lord North, and showed him a copy of the paper entitled "Conciliatory Propositions." He told me

*This bill may be found in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., at p. 157; and remarks on the same, at p. 267.

utterly void of foundation. I remember that you have, as you say, often urged this on former occasions, and that it always gave me more disgust than my friendship for you permitted me to express. But since you have now gone so far as to carry such a proposition to Lord North, as arising from us, it is

that I had executed my commission perfectly to his intelligence of the matter. I should tell you that, at the conclusion of my conversation with Lord North, we both settled jointly the result thus: "I recommend to your Lordship the propositions which I have had the honor of stating to you, as *general grounds of a proposed negotiation, leading towards peace, under liberal constructions.*" Lord North said, in answer: "So I understand them."

Upon this footing matters rested for some days. On Sunday last, December the 30th, I received a message from Lord North, through the means of Lord Guildford, requesting an explanation of this point, viz.: "Who is authorized to treat on the part of America? whether you or Mr. Adams, or both jointly; and whether the propositions above stated would be acknowledged, as general grounds of negotiation towards peace, by the person or persons authorized to treat; because it was necessary, before he could lay a matter of so great importance before the Cabinet Council, that he should be entitled to say, these propositions and general outlines come to me from responsible and authorized persons." The moment I received the request of Lord North, I agreed entirely with the necessity of an explanation on that head. I had partly expected such an inquiry, and it gave me satisfaction when it came, as I thought it the first reply towards a parley. If the propositions had not gained some attention, it would have been of very little importance to have inquired whence they came. As to the caution itself, it appears to me not only prudent but indispensable. The forms of caution in such cases are the essentials of caution. I had determined on my own account, before this message, to have written to you, that I might have received your sentiments directly from yourself, without any further intervention, that we might proceed with caution and certainty in a matter of such infinite importance. This message has only quickened my despatch. The two points of explanation requested, I take to be these: whether the outlines above recited are properly stated, always considering that they imply no further than *general grounds of negotiation towards peace, under liberal constructions;* and, secondly, by what authorized person or persons any answer on this subject would be accepted; in short, a requisition of credentials preparatory to a formal answer, which is so much the

necessary that I should be explicit with you, and tell you plainly that I never had such an idea; and I believe there is not a man in America, a few *English Tories* excepted, that would not spurn the thought of deserting a noble and generous friend, for the sake of a truce with an unjust and cruel enemy.

more necessary on the supposition of a favorable reception of the first hint towards negotiation.

When I last saw Mr. Alexander, viz., about four or five days ago, he had met with some desponding impressions, as if the ministry were indisposed to peace, and that things would not do, etc. He did not tell me upon what ground he had formed such apprehension; however, lest he should have imparted any such by letter to you, I will state that point to you, because it may have infinite ill consequences to be too touchy on such occasions. A premature jealousy may create the very evil it suspects. The ministry in this country are not every thing. The sense of the people, when really expressed and exerted, would be most prevalent. Suppose then it were a proved point that every man in the ministry were in his heart adverse to peace. What then? Withhold all overtures? By no means. I should advise the very contrary in the strongest manner. I should say, let the overtures be made so much the more public and explicit by those who do wish for peace. It is the unfortunate state of things which has hitherto bound the cause of France to any possible treaty with America, and which has thereby thrown a national damp upon any actual public exertions to procure a negotiation for peace with America. I have the strongest opinion that if it were publicly known to the people of England that a negotiation might be opened with America, upon the terms above specified, that all the ministry together, if they were ill disposed to a man, would not venture to thwart such a measure.

But why should it be supposed that the ministry, to a man, are ill disposed to a peace? Suppose them to be half and half, and the public wish and voice of the people in favor of negotiation, it is evident on which side the balance would incline. But why should we seek to throw a damp prematurely upon any chance? Why presume even against any individual? I grant that it would be a bitter trial of humility to be brought to a formal recognition of independence at the haughty command of France, and I believe every part of the nation would proceed to every extremity before they would submit to that. But if that touchy point can be provided for *sub silentio*, and if the proposed treaty with America may be carried on free from control by France, let us give the cause of peace a fair trial; at the worst we

I have again read over your Conciliatory Bill, with the manuscript propositions that accompany it, and am concerned to find that one cannot give vent to a simple wish for peace, a mere sentiment of humanity, without having it interpreted as *a disposition to submit to any base conditions* that may be offered us, rather than continue the war; for on no other supposition could you propose to us a truce of ten years, during which we are to engage not to assist France, while you continue the war with her. A truce, too, wherein nothing is to be mentioned that may weaken your pretensions to dominion over us, which you may therefore resume at the end of

should be but where we were, if we should fail. But why should we expect to fail, when the greatest rub is removed, by the liberty of entering separately into a treaty? I think it a most favorable event, leading towards peace. Give us a truce with its concomitants, and a little time so given for cooling will have most excellent effects on both sides. Eternal peace and conciliation may then follow.

I send this to you by the quickest despatch, that we may bring this point to a fair issue before the meeting of Parliament. God prosper the blessed work of peace. I am ever yours most affectionately,

D. HARTLEY.

P. S.—January 8, 1782. Since writing this letter, I have seen Mr. Alexander, and shall see him from time to time to communicate with him. I do not suppose I shall have an answer from Lord North, till the preliminary points are so settled as to enable him to give an answer in form. The ministry might undoubtedly give a short negative, if they thought proper; but I do not expect that. You may be assured that I have and shall continue to enforce every argument in the most conciliatory manner to induce a negotiation. I am very sorry for Mr. Alexander's confinement, on his own account, and on that of his friends, and because probably, in the future state of this business, his personal exertions may be very serviceable in the cause of peace. Every assistance and every exertion of mine will always be most heartily devoted to that cause. I have nothing further to add, either upon my own reflections or from my subsequent conversations with Mr. Alexander, to what I have stated in the foregoing letter. If we once make a good beginning upon the plan there stated, I should hope

the term, or at pleasure; when we should have so covered ourselves with infamy, by our treachery to our first friend, as that no other nation can ever after be disposed to assist us, however cruelly you might think fit to treat us. Believe me, my dear friend, America has too much understanding, and is too

that such a negotiation, founded on such principles, would promise fair to produce every salutary and pacific consequence in the event.

D. H.

Remarks on the Conciliatory Bill

In the title and preamble of the bill, the words *Provinces of North America* are used as general words, neither implying dependence nor independence.

Clause I. *The Truce* is taken from the Conciliatory Act of 1778, and is indefinite as to the proposed duration of the truce. Under this clause it might be proposed to negotiate three points, viz.; the removal of the British troops from the Thirteen Provinces of North America; and, connectedly with this article, a stipulation for the security of the friends of the British government. The third article might be a stipulation that the respective parties, during the continuance of the truce, should not either directly or indirectly give assistance to the enemies of each other.

Clause II. *Articles of Intercourse and Pacification.* Under this clause some arrangements might be settled for establishing a free and mutual intercourse, civil and commercial, between Great Britain and the aforesaid Provinces of North America.

Clause III. *Suspension of Certain Acts of Parliament.* By this clause a free communication may be kept open between the two countries, during the negotiation for peace, without stumbling against any claim of rights which might draw into contest the question of dependence or independence.

Clause IV. *The Ratification by Parliament.* The object of this clause is to consolidate peace and conciliation, step by step, as the negotiation may proceed, and to prevent, as far as possible, any return of war, after the first declaration of a truce. By the operation of this clause, a temporary truce may be converted into a perpetual and permanent peace.

Clause V. *A Temporary Act.* This clause, creating a temporary act for a specific purpose of negotiation in view, is taken from the Act of 1778.

sensible of the value of the world's good opinion, to forfeit it all by such perfidy. The Congress will never instruct their Commissioners to obtain a peace on such ignominious terms; and though there can be but few things in which I should venture to disobey their orders, yet if it were possible for them to give me such an order as this I should certainly refuse to act; I should instantly renounce their commission, and banish myself forever from so infamous a country.

We are a little ambitious too of your esteem, and as I think we have acquired some share of it by our manner of making war with you, I trust we shall not hazard the loss of it by consenting meanly to a dishonorable peace.

Lord North was wise in demanding of you some authorized acknowledgment of the proposition from authorized persons. He justly thought it too improbable to be relied on, so as to lay it before the Privy Council. You can now inform him that the whole has been a mistake, and that no such proposition as that of a separate peace has been, is, or is ever likely to be made by me, and I believe by no other authorized person whatever in behalf of America. You may further, if you please, inform his lordship that Mr. Adams, Mr. Laurens, Mr. Jay, and myself have long since been empowered, by a special commission, to treat of peace whenever a negotiation shall be opened for that purpose; but it must always be understood that this is to be in conjunction with our allies, conformably to the solemn treaties made with them.

You have, my dear friend, a strong desire to promote peace, and it is a most laudable and virtuous desire. Permit me, then, to wish that you would, in order to succeed as a mediator, avoid such invidious expressions as may have an effect in preventing your purpose. You tell me that no stipulation for our independence must be in the treaty, because you "verily believe so deep is the jealousy between England and France, that England would fight for a straw to the last man and the last shilling rather than be *dictated to* by France." And again, that "the nation would proceed to every extremity rather than be brought to a formal recognition of independence at the *haughty command* of France." My dear sir, if every proposition of terms of peace that may be made by one of the parties at war, is to be called and considered by the other as *dictating*, and a *haughty command*, and for that reason rejected, with a resolution of fighting to the last man rather than agree to it, you see that in such case no treaty of peace is possible.

In fact, we began the war for independence on your government, which we found tyrannical, and this before France had any thing to do with our affairs. The article in our treaty whereby the "two parties engage that neither of them shall conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other first obtained, and mutually engage not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States shall have been *tacitly* assured by the treaty or treaties that shall terminate the war," was an article inserted at our

instance, being in our favor. And you see, by the article itself, that your great difficulty may be easily got over, as a formal acknowledgment of our independence is not made necessary. But we hope by God's help to enjoy it, and I suppose we shall fight for it as long as we are able.

I do not make any remarks upon the other propositions, because I think that, unless they were made by authority, the discussion of them is unnecessary, and may be inconvenient. The supposition of our being disposed to make a separate peace I could not be silent upon, as it materially affected our reputation and its essential interests. If I have been a little warm on that offensive point, reflect on your repeatedly urging it, and endeavor to excuse me. Whatever may be the fate of our poor countries, let you and me die as we have lived, in peace with each other.

Assuredly I continue, with great and sincere esteem, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MXXI

TO JOHN JAY

Passy, 15 January, 1782.

Dear Sir:—Mr. Grand tells me that he hears from Madrid you are uneasy at my long silence. I have had much vexation and perplexity lately with the affair of the goods in Holland; and I have so many urgent correspondences to keep up that some

of them at times necessarily suffer. I purpose writing fully to you next post. In the meantime I send the enclosed for your meditation. The ill-timed bills, as you justly term them, do us infinite prejudice; but we must not be discouraged. I am ever, with the greatest esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.[1]

MXXII

TO JOHN JAY

Passy, 19 January, 1782.

Dear Sir:—In mine of the 15th I mentioned my intention of writing fully to you by this day's post. But, understanding since that a courier will soon go from Versailles, I rather choose that conveyance.

I received duly your letter of November 21st, but it found me in a very perplexed situation. I had great payments to make for the extravagant and very inconvenient purchase in Holland, together with large acceptances by Mr. Adams of bills drawn on Mr. Laurens and himself, and I had no certainty of providing the money. I had also a quarrel upon my hands with Messrs. de Neufville and others, owners of two vessels hired by Gillon to carry the goods he had contracted to carry in his own ship. I had worried this friendly and generous court with often-repeated after-clap demands, occasioned by these unadvised (as well as ill-advised) and, therefore,

[1] See Mr. Jay's answer in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. VIII., p. 54.

unexpected drafts, and was ashamed to show my face to the minister. In these circumstances, I knew not what answer to make you. I could not encourage you to expect the relief desired; and, having still some secret hope, I was unwilling to discourage you, and thereby occasion a protest of bills, which possibly I might find means of enabling you to pay. Thus I delayed writing perhaps too long.

But, to this moment, I have obtained no assurance of having it in my power to aid you, though no endeavors on my part have been wanting. We have been assisted with near twenty millions since the beginning of last year, besides a fleet and army; and yet I am obliged to worry them with my solicitations for more, which makes us appear insatiable.

This letter will not go before Tuesday. Perhaps by that time I may be able to say explicitly, Yes or No. I am very sensible of your unhappy situation, and I believe you feel as much for me. You mention my proposing to repay the sum you want in America. I tried that last year. I drew a bill on Congress for a considerable sum to be advanced me here, and paid there in provisions for the French troops. My bill was not honored.

I was in hopes the loan in Holland, if it succeeded, being for ten millions, would have made us all easy. It was long uncertain; it is now completed. But unfortunately it has most of it been eaten up by advances here. You see, by the letter of which I sent you a copy, upon what terms I obtain another million of it. That, if I get it, will enable me to pay

the thirty thousand dollars you have borrowed; for we must not let your friend suffer. What I am to do afterwards, God knows.

I am much surprised at the dilatory and reserved conduct of your court. I know not to what amount you have obtained aids from it; but if they are not considerable, it were to be wished you had never been sent there, as the slight they have put upon our offered friendship is very disreputable to us, and, of course, hurtful to our affairs elsewhere. I think they are short-sighted, and do not look very far into futurity, or they would seize with avidity so excellent an opportunity of securing a neighbor's friendship which may hereafter be of great consequence to their American affairs.

If I were in Congress, I should advise your being instructed to thank them for past favors, and take your leave. As I am situated, I do not presume to give you such advice, nor could you take it if I should. But I conceive there would be nothing amiss in your mentioning in a short memoir the length of time elapsed since the date of the secret article, and since your arrival, to urge their determination upon it, and pressing them to give you an explicit, definite, immediate answer, whether they would enter into treaty with us or not; and in case of refusal, solicit your recall, that you may not continue from year to year at a great expense in a constant state of uncertainty with regard to so important a matter. I do not see how they can decently refuse such an answer. But their silence, after the demand made, should in my opinion be understood

as a refusal, and we should act accordingly. I think I see a very good use that might be made of it, which I will not venture to explain in this letter.

I know not how the account of your salary stands, but I would have you draw upon me for a quarter at present, which shall be paid; and it will be a great pleasure to me if I shall be able to pay up all your arrears.

Mr. Laurens, being now at liberty, perhaps may soon come here and be ready to join us, if there should be any negotiations for peace. In England they are mad for a separate one with us, that they may more effectually take revenge on France and Spain. I have had several overtures hinted to me lately from different quarters, but I am deaf. The thing is impossible. We can never agree to desert our first and our faithful friend on any consideration whatever. We should become infamous by such abominable baseness. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXIII

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

Passy, 23 January, 1782.

Dear Sir:—It is a long time since I have written to you; but I am not the less sensible of your obliging attention in writing frequently to me. I have now before me your several favors of September 15th, October 23d, November 8th, and January 11th. Your communications are always agreeable, and I

beg you would continue them, and continue also to excuse the want of punctuality in correspondence of an old man, who has been opprest with too much business. The arrival of Mr. Barclay, appointed Consul-General, will ease me of a good deal, and I hope for the future to be more exact.

Mr. Boyeted was so obliging as to call on me with one of your letters, and has since sent me the books, which afford me a good deal of information. I thank you very much for them. I expect soon some copies of a new volume of the *Transactions* of your American Society, of which I shall request M. de Campomanes to accept one. Be pleased to present my respects to him. I see that he will be a great benefactor to his country.

With regard to money matters, I am continually embarrassed by some means or other with fresh difficulties. I was told that no more random bills would be drawn after the beginning of April last, and I flattered myself with being soon at ease by paying off those issued before; but as they continue coming, drawn not only on Mr. Jay, but on Mr. Adams, Mr. Laurens, and myself, I begin to suspect that the drawing continues, and that the bills are antedated. It is impossible for me to go on with demands after demands. I was never advised of the amount of the drafts, either upon myself or upon any of the other ministers. The drafts themselves that are directed to me are indeed a justification of my paying them; but I never had any orders to pay those drawn on others, nor have I ever received a syllable of approbation for having done so. Thus I

stand charged with vast sums which I have disbursed for the public service without authority. In my present situation I cannot encourage Mr. Jay to accept any more bills. I think, too, *all things considered*, that if some of them must go back protested, it had better be from either France or Holland. *But I will do my best if possible to prevent it.* I wish with you that we had contented ourselves with such aids as this kind and generous nation could afford us, and never sought to entangle ourselves with obligations to any others.

In writing to Mr. Jay I forgot to mention how much I was obliged by his permitting me to read his despatches sent by Major Franks. They are very full and satisfactory. I wonder at what you have heard that the Congress had for eight months no letters from Mr. Adams, as I think him the most diligent of all correspondents, having seen in the votes of Congress mention made of the dates of letters received from him, by which it seemed that he had written almost every day, and sometimes twice a day. My great fault is writing too seldom; I should write oftener (and should be happy), if I had nothing else to do.

I wrote to Mr. Jay on the 19th that I hoped, before the following Tuesday, to be able to say whether I should or should not have it again in my power to aid him. I am still in the dark, but I shall pay your draft as well as his for a quarter of your salaries. I wish each of you would state an account and send it to me of what has become due since the commencement and what you have received; and if

I can procure the means I will pay the balances; but it is necessary to write to Congress for a direct provision hereafter.

You do my little scribblings too much honor in proposing to print them; but they are at your disposition, except the letter to the Academy of which having several English puns in it, cannot be translated, and besides has too much *grossièrté* to be borne by the polite readers of these nations. If you should print any of them you will conceal my name.[1]

I see advised here, *Spanish ink of a fine black for writing*. From this one would imagine that Spanish ink had obtained a character for blackness. If there is any of it to be had at Madrid, I wish you would use it in writing your letters; for my eyes not being very good, when the ink and paper are so nearly of a color I find it difficult to read them.

[1] The communication here referred to was a satire upon the learned societies of Franklin's time, and the idle questions upon which they were wont to deliberate.

The letter commences by reciting one of these questions which had been propounded by the Brussels Academy, and he makes it the pretext for suggesting to them another question, quite absurd in itself, but which he makes still more absurd by discussing it with the gravity of a schoolman.

The purpose of Franklin's satire is the same as that which the author of *Hudibras* had in ridiculing the deliberations of the Royal Society of London over the question propounded by Charles I.: "If you put a shrimp into a vessel full of water, why does the water not overflow?"

It is doing Butler's poem no injustice, however, to say that Franklin's satire, though open unfortunately to the criticism which he makes of it himself in the text, of "*Grossièrté*," was in no respect inferior in wit and effectiveness. As it was written for the amusement of one or two of his scientific friends, and as he not only never gave it to the press, but distinctly forbade its being printed with his name, it is necessarily excluded from these pages.—Editor.

Jan. 25th. Since writing the above the Marquis de Lafayette, is arrived, to my great joy, as I am persuaded he will be very useful to our affairs. I forward some letters for Mr. Jay.

Robert R. Livingston is appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs and General Lincoln Secretary of War. Mr. Morris conducts the finances to general satisfaction and the public credit is reviving.

I this day met Mr. Cases at Mr. Grand's, where we dined, and he gave me a letter from you. I shall with pleasure cultivate his acquaintance, for which I am obliged to you.

With great esteem, I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

Please to give the enclosed papers to Mr. Jay, which should have gone to him with my last.

MXXIV

FROM DAVID HARTLEY

London, 24 January, 1782.

My Dear Sir:—I received yours of the 15th instant this day. I must take the earliest opportunity of setting you right in one mistake which runs through your whole letter, and which to you, under that mistake, must be a very delicate point. You seem to apprehend that America has been stated, in the proposition to Lord North, as "disposed to enter into a separate treaty with Great Britain"; but you meet the condition, viz., in the words im-

mediately following, "*and that their allies were disposed to consent to it.*" There cannot possibly be any supposition of treachery to allies in any proposition to which they may *consent.* A separate treaty, with the *consent* of the allies of America, was the proposition communicated to me by Mr. Alexander, and which I laid before the minister, and which I reported back again to Mr. Alexander in writing, when I showed him the paper entitled "Conciliatory Propositions," which I took care to reduce to writing, with a view of avoiding mistakes; therefore I have not *misunderstood* Mr. Alexander. I have since seen Mr. Alexander many times, and he has always stated one and the same proposition, viz., that America was disposed to enter into a separate treaty, because their *allies were disposed to consent that they should;* therefore there cannot exist a suspicion of treachery. It occurred to me once, while I was writing, to bar against that misconstruction; but having specified the *consent of the allies of America* in the same sentence, I could not conceive such a misconstruction to have been possible.

You have mistaken another point greatly. You say "a truce for *ten* years." There is not in the bill any such disposition or thought; on the contrary, it is specified in the enclosed paper that it is kept *indefinite*, for the sole purpose of avoiding the suspicion which you have suggested. The truce may be for twenty, or fifty, or one hundred years; in my opinion, the longer the better. But in any case, what I mean now to state is the *indefinite* term of the bill. The articles of intercourse are only proposed for ten years

certain, just to strew the way with inviting and conciliatory facilities, in the hope that *a little time given for cooling* would confirm a perpetual peace. If I were permitted to be the mediator, I should certainly propose the truce for twenty years; but if no more than ten years could be obtained, I would certainly not refuse such a ground of pacification and treaty. I refer you to several of my letters, two or three years ago, for the justification of my sentiments on that head.

Another point: look at all my letters since 1778, and see if I have at any time suggested any breach of treaty or of honor; on the contrary, I think a faithless nation, if exterminated, would not deserve the pity of mankind. I speak of all I know of the treaty between America and France, and what I think reasonable upon the case itself. If America is further bound than we know of, they must abide by it. I speak to the apparent and public foundation of the treaty article second, with the provision of *tacitly*, from article eighth; and now I refer you to my letter to you, as long ago as April 10, 1779: "If beyond this essential and directed end, and upon grounds totally unconnected with that alliance, not upon motives of magnanimity *for the relief of an innocent people*, but from distinct and unconnected motives of private European sentiments, America should be dragged into the consequence of a general European war, she may apply to France the apostrophe of the poet, speaking in the person of Helen to Paris:

" ' Non hoc pollicitus tuæ.' "

You see, therefore, that our sentiments have been

uniform, and, as I think, reasonable, because I still remain in those sentiments.

Suppose, for instance (and you may call it the case of a straw, if you please), that Great Britain and France should continue the war for ten years, on the point of a commissary at Dunkirk, ay or no. Would it be *reasonable*, or a *casus fœderis*, that America should be precluded from a separate treaty for ten years, and therefore involved in the consequential war, after the *essential and direct ends* of the treaty of February 6, 1778, were accomplished? As far as my judgment goes, upon the knowledge of such facts as are public, I should think it was neither *reasonable* nor a *casus fœderis*. This is the breviate of the argument, in which there is no thought or suggestion of any breach of faith or honor. I did conclude that France was disposed to give their *consent*, because Mr. Alexander informed me so, and because I thought it reasonable that France should consent, and reasonable that America should enjoy the benefit of that consent. I transmitted it to Lord North, as a proposition temperate and pacific on the part of America, and consented to by their allies, and on no other ground did I transmit or propose it. All that your letter tells me is, "that America will not break with her allies, and that her Commissioners will not entertain such a thought"; but give me leave to add that they, as honest men, cannot disdain such a thought more than I do; every honest man ought to disdain the office, or the thought, of proposing a breach of faith to them. I have often told you that such an office or such a thought shall never be mine.

But you have not told me that France would not be disposed to consent to a separate treaty of peace for that ally, whose peace was the original declared object of the alliance, in the case supposed, viz., of certain supposed or real punctilios between two proud and belligerent nations, which might possibly involve America for years in a war totally unconnected with the objects of the alliance. Besides, if any rubs should occur in the road to a general peace, France is too proud a nation to say that, beyond the *policy* of contributing to the separation of America from Great Britain in any contest of rivalship,they cannot meet their rivals in war, without the assistance of America. I cannot conceive that the minister of a great belligerent nation could entertain such a thought, as affecting their own sense of honor, or be so unreasonable to their allies as to withhold consent to their peace, when *the essential and direct ends* of the alliance were satisfied. Observe, I do not contend against a general peace; on the contrary, I mean to recommend the most prudent means for producing it. But, as an anxious lover of peace, I feel terrors which dismay me, when I consider the dangers which may obstruct a general peace, arising from the pride and prejudices of nations, which are not to be controlled in their heat by arguments of reason or philosophy.

Can any man in reason and philosophy tell me why any two nations in the world are called natural enemies, as if it were the ordinance of God and nature? I fear it is too deeply engraved in the passions of man; and for that reason I would elude and

evade the contest with such passions. I would strew the road to peace with flowers, and not with thorns. *Haughty*, and *dictating*, and *commands* are no words of mine; I abhor them, and I fear them. I would elude their force by gentle means, and step by step. In article eighth there are the following words: "By the treaty or treaties that shall terminate the war." Let us have one treaty begun, and I think the rest would follow. I fear, when contending passions are raised, lest we should lose all by grasping at too much.

January 25th. I have just seen Mr. Alexander, and have talked the matter over with him. I send you a copy of his sentiments upon it, which, for the sake of avoiding further mistakes, he committed to paper, and which, I think, justify me in saying that I understood from him that France was *disposed to give their consent*, as he *explained* it to me, and as I explained it to the minister.[1] He did not say, nor

[1] The following is Mr. Alexander's explanatory note to Mr. Hartley: "As I had not the opportunity of seeing your correspondence at this time, I was unable to prevent the misunderstanding that seems to have arisen. There is no proposition of which I am more convinced than that 'nothing can be done without the concurrence of allies.' But, as the chief obstruction towards an accommodation seemed to me to lie in the personal character of some, who have great weight in this matter, and as the object of the war (the independence of America) seems, in the opinion of all men, to be secured, my own opinion was, and still is, that there was so much wisdom and moderation where prejudice prevents us from seeing it, that, provided the ends of the war are accomplished to the satisfaction of all parties, they will be very ready to let us out of it in the most gentle manner, by consenting equally that the business shall go on in one, two, or three separate deeds, as shall be most palatable here; and to doubt that our friends are desirous of finishing the contest, with the approbation of their allies, is to doubt their understanding."

did I understand him to say, that he was *authorized* by the French ministry, or by any one else, to declare that France had bound herself to consent, or that any such requisition had been made to her; but that it was his opinion that France would consent, and that I might proceed upon that presumption, so far as to recommend overtures of negotiation. Accordingly, the phrase of my letter to you is, that he *explained* to me *that their allies were disposed to consent.* You see what his opinion is on this day; and, as you have not told me that France will not consent, the *reasonable* probability which still remains with me, for the hopes of opening an amicable treaty, remains as it did.

I could not delay saying thus, by the very first mail, upon a point equally delicate to me as well as to yourself. My dear friend, I beg of you not to think, either that you can be considered as capable of entertaining, or that I should be capable of suggesting, any unworthy or dishonorable propositions. If there has been any misunderstanding, it is now cleared up; and the ground for negotiation remains open as before. I therefore still entertain my hopes. I am ever your affectionate D. Hartley.

MXXV

TO JOHN BARRY [1]

Passy, 24 January, 1782.

Sir:—I received your letter of the 17th with pleasure as it informed me of your safe arrival at

[1] Captain in the American navy, having command of the *Alliance* frigate at L'Orient. He had lately arrived from America; and in his

Fort Louis. I shall see the Marquis de Lafayette to-day, and we will try what can be done towards getting you some French sailors; but I doubt they are too much wanted to be spared to us. You will find, however, a number of Americans at L'Orient, who have lately escaped, or been exchanged, from the prisons of England. Your desire of redeeming more of them is noble, and I heartily wish you success in it. Mr. Barclay, the consul, to whom you should apply in case of wanting any thing for your ship, is now in Holland; but I expect him in a few days. Let me know if, when you return to America, you can take any of the Congress goods, which he will have to send. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXVI

TO ROBERT MORRIS

Passy, 28 January, 1782.

Sir:—I wrote a few lines to you this morning, and understanding that the courier is not yet gone off for Brest, I have time to acquaint you that our good friend the Marquis, whom I have just now seen, has been, at my request, with all the ministers, spent an hour with each of them, pressing with all the arguments possible a further supply of money for the ensuing campaign; and being better acquainted with facts, he was able to speak with greater weight

vessel the Marquis de Lafayette, Viscount de Noailles, General Duportail, and several other French officers came as passengers.

than I could possibly do. He finds that the general determination had been not to furnish any more money; and though he thinks he has so far prevailed as that the matter may be reconsidered and possibly some may be obtained, which, however, is far from being certain, he does not imagine it will be much, and that therefore it will be best for us to act as if none were to be expected. I shall see M. de Vergennes to-morrow, and shall write you further by the first opportunity.

I will just add one short reflection, that wrong estimates are often made of a friend's abilities; and borrowers are apt to say: Help me with such a sum, 't is to a man of your wealth a trifle. They are ignorant of the demands constantly made upon him by the course of the expense he is necessarily engaged in, which may be equal to and perhaps exceed his incomes. And it is grating to be pressed for loans in a manner that oblige a man either to seem unkind by refusing, or to disclose his own inabilities. Let us be assured that if we do not obtain another loan it is [not?] for want of good-will to us.

With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXVII

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Passy, 28 January, 1782.

Sir:—I received, at the same time, your several letters of October 20th, 24th, and November 26th,

which I purpose to answer fully by the return of the *Alliance*. Having just had a very short notice of the departure of this ship, I can only at present mention the great pleasure your appointment gives me, and my intention of corresponding with you regularly and frequently, as you desire. The information contained in your letter is full and clear; I shall endeavor that mine, of the state of affairs here, may be as satisfactory. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—Having just learned that the courier is not gone, I have time to enclose two letters from Holland, by which you will see something of the state of affairs in that country. Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to Congress, and assure them of my faithful services.

MXXVIII

TO GUSTAVUS CONYNGHAM

Passy, 6 February, 1782.

Sir:—I am to acknowledge the receipt of two letters from you since you came to Nantes. In the first you desired a copy of your original commission. I have caused search to be made for it, but can find no trace of it; as, at the time it was given to you, the Commissioners kept no minutes of their proceedings, and it is but a few days since I learned from Dr. Bancroft that it was taken from you at Dunkirk, and sent up with other papers to the Count de Vergennes. The first time I go to Versailles I will

inquire for it. If it is lost, I will send you a certificate that it did exist, though at present not to be found.

In your second letter you desire to know what money Mr. D—— has charged or advanced to you. I never was able to obtain from him a regular account of the moneys put into his hands for the relief of prisoners in England, but I think he mentions in one of his letters he paid fifty pounds for you. Probably this may not be true; for he is the greatest villain I ever met with, having the last winter drawn on me for four hundred and ninety-five pounds for the support of American prisoners, and applied but thirty pounds to their use. However, he can have no right to demand repayment from you, having received the money from me. With very great esteem and best wishes for your prosperity, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXIX

TO JOHN BARRY

Passy, 10 February, 1782.

Sir:—I have been honored by yours of the 31st past, and am glad to find you are willing to take over some of the public goods. I should not desire it of you, if certain circumstances unforeseen had not rendered it necessary. The goods are for the use of our troops and marine, and were collected at Brest, with an intention of sending them in certain transports, which were prepared for that purpose

by the government. The loss of a number of transports taken by Kempenfeld's squadron, which were carrying stores for the king's fleet and army, making it necessary to replace those stores and forward them immediately, it has been found that there is no room for ours, and that sufficient new transports cannot readily be obtained.

It has therefore been proposed to me to put into your ship what you can well receive, and to get freight if I can for the rest, to go under your convoy. Mr. Barclay, who is acquainted with such business, is not yet returned, but I expect him daily. In the meantime I wish you would proceed to Brest immediately, where you will find orders given to the commissary to deliver so much of the Congress stores to you as you shall think fit to receive. My despatches for America shall also meet you there; and, as the quantity of goods may possibly render your ship less fit for sailing or fighting, it would perhaps be well if you concluded to sail with the king's ships which convoy the transports, and you will probably depart by the middle of March. Though you have not, as you observe, any orders for this operation, I am persuaded that its utility and necessity, together with this letter, will be deemed a full justification. Endeavors are using to procure freight for the rest, to go under the same convoy, but perhaps it may not be possible to do it in time. If you can engage any from L'Orient, it will be doing great service. The goods in all will make about one thousand tons. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXX

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 12 February, 1782.

SIR:—I received the honor of yours dated the 7th inst., acquainting me with the presentation of several more bills drawn on Mr. Laurens. I think you will do well to accept them, and I shall endeavor to enable you to pay them. I should be glad to see a complete list of those you have already accepted. Perhaps from the series of numbers and the deficiencies one may be able to divine the sum that has been issued, of which we have never been informed, as we ought to have been. Ignorance of this has subjected me to the unpleasant task of making repeated demands, which displease our friends by seeming to have no end. The same is the case with the bills on Mr. Jay and on myself. This has among other things made me quite sick of my Gibeonite office—that of drawing water for the whole congregation of Israel. But I am happy to learn from our Minister of Finance that, after the end of March next, no further drafts shall be made on me, or trouble given me by drafts of others.

The Duke de Vauguyon must be with you before this time. I am impatient to hear the result of your States on the demand you have made of a categoric answer, etc. I think with you that it may be wrong to interrupt or perplex their deliberations by asking aids during the present critical situation of affairs.

I understood that the goods had all been delivered to Mr. Barclay, and I punctually paid all the

bills. That gentleman now writes me that those purchased of Gillon are detained on pretence of his debts. These new demands were never mentioned to me before. It has been and will be a villainous affair from beginning to end. Etc. B. Franklin.

MXXXI

TO MR. BARCLAY

Passy, 12 February, 1782.

Sir:—I received duly yours of the 3d inst, and I am enraged to find that after I had been informed the goods were delivered to you, and had in consequence paid punctually all the bills, Messrs. de Neufville should attempt to stop those bought of Gillon. These new demands have been artfully kept out of sight till now. There is more roguery, it seems, in that country than I imagined. Neither Colonel Laurens nor Captain Jackson left with me the contract made with Gillon; but the bills of exchange drawn in his favor by Jackson, and accepted and paid by me, are proofs of the goods having been paid for, as we had no other concern with Gillon's affairs. The value is near £10,000 sterling.

I know not what to say at present with regard to your proposition of my putting into your hands 150,000 livres at once. You give indeed a good reason for it, so far as relates to yourself, viz.: "that you are really afraid that, from my situation and from the manner I am drawn upon from America, my embarrassments in money matters may increase." You will allow that it is natural for me to

have for the same reasons the same apprehensions, and to endeavor to avoid these embarrassments as much as possible by not complying with your request, more especially as I find by Mr. Morris' last letters that he imagines a sum in my disposition vastly greater than the fact, in consequence of which he has already given me orders far beyond my abilities to comply with. I submit it therefore to your consideration whether we had not better store those goods in Holland at present, acquaint him with their situation, and request him to send vessels for them, rather than put ourselves to the inconvenience of buying ships, as you propose to carry them, which ships we may not be able to pay for. And, considering the quantities gone and going from this country, these goods will probably not be so much wanted, as that the delay will be greater prejudice to our affairs than my protesting Congress bills would occasion. In a few days I shall be able to write to you more explicitly on this head; in the meantime I could wish you not to engage in the purchase of those ships, though you may be assured that I shall do all that I can find by any means in my power to aid you in your operations. With much esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

MXXXII

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Philadelphia, 13 February, 1782.

Dear Sir: We have been extremely alarmed at some communications which the minister of France

made me from his last letters. They look extremely as if the Count de Vergennes imagined that neither Spain nor Holland was anxious for our success. They discourage the idea of a loan from them, or even from France. Our letters from Holland confirm the conjectures, so far as they relate to that state. Mr. Adams seems almost to despair of doing anything with respect to an alliance or loan, and from Mr. Jay we have heard nothing in a very long time, and are ignorant of any steps he may have taken since the appointment of M. del Campo to treat with him.

These mortifying disappointments oblige us, though reluctantly, to call upon France for further assistance. Your solicitations will be infinitely useful to your country, if they procure for it what I will venture to pronounce essential to their safety. In this spirit, the instruction, which I do myself the honor to enclose, has passed Congress, and a second resolution, which I also enclose, which leads to such information as will enable you to convince the court of France that their navy can nowhere be more effectually employed to distress the common enemy than in America. I own this consideration is a great relief to my feelings, when we make these importunate demands for money; and I hope it will enable you to press them with some degree of dignity.

That France can aid us is not to be doubted, for it is certain she never carried on a war that distressed her finances less. She has no expensive subsidies to pay; her money is expended either at home or in a country from whence it returns. Her army

is not greatly increased, and her commerce under the protection of her fleets enjoys a security that it seldom has experienced before. I would not, however, have you suppose that this is the language I hold here. I know too well the necessity of making every exertion which in our present impoverished situation we are capable of; and I neglect no means which my present station puts it in my power to call forth.

Congress have taken every wise measure for that purpose, and I firmly persuade myself that we shall be able to form the most vigorous co-operation with such force as his Majesty may please to send out. I am confident that the peace must be made in America. Every blow here is fatal to the grand object of the present war; to the hopes, to the wishes, and to the pride of Great Britain. Other conquests she expects to have restored upon a peace; what is lost here, she knows to be lost for ever.

The daily complaints that we receive from seamen confined in England concur with humanity and the national honor to render some expedient for their relief necessary. I need not, I am persuaded, recommend this to your particular care. We have not yet obtained, at least as far as I can learn, a compensation for the prisoners taken by Paul Jones and returned to England. Is it impossible, either to settle a cartel in Europe, or to have the Americans confined there sent to New York for exchange? The last proposition is so much in favor of England, that it would probably be acceded to; and yet, such is the distress of the people who have been long

confined, that it would be desirable to have the offer made. I am just now applied to by a Mrs. Simmonds, whose husband is the mate of a vessel, and has been two years confined in Mill Prison; it would be an act of charity to attempt to procure his release. You will do me the favor to collect and transmit a list of the numbers confined in England, and, as far as possible, for the satisfaction of their friends, of the names.

We have not a word of intelligence to communicate, unless it be some little disturbances in the country which has been distinguished by the names of New Hampshire Grants, and Vermont, and which it may be proper to mention to you, since the facility with which the British deceive themselves, and the address with which they deceive others, may render it a matter of moment in England, though in fact it is of none in America. The bulk of the people of that country are "*New England Presbyterian Whigs.*" Some of those, in possession of the powers of government, have more address than principle. Finding themselves exposed to inroads from Canada, they have tampered with that government, and pretended to be willing to form a treaty of neutrality with them during the war, and to return to the obedience of Britain on a peace. This has had the effect they intended, and in some measure defeated an expedition which the enemy made last year, and retained their main body in inaction at Ticonderoga, while the parties they sent to the westward were beaten and dispersed by our militia. The secret has been discovered, is disavowed by the people, and such

measures are now taken that, by the time the king of Great Britain and his council (before whom the propositions now lie) have formed a plan in consequence of them, they will be made the means of drawing them into new difficulties.

I presume that you keep up a constant correspondence with Mr. Jay and Mr. Adams, and assist them with your information and advice. I must beg the favor of you to transmit them this intelligence, that they may be prepared to meet any assertions of the enemy on that head. I take leave to repeat to you my desire to have the papers and political publications sent regularly to this office. I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MXXXIII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

PASSY, 16 February, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor of the 24th past. You have taken pains to rectify a mistake of mine, relating to the aim of your letters. I accept kindly your replication, and I hope you will excuse my error, when you reflect that I knew of no consent given by France to our treating separately of peace, and that there have been mixed in some of your conversations and letters various reasonings to show that, if France should require something of us that was unreasonable, we then should not be obliged by our treaty to join with her in continuing the war.

As there had never been such requisition, what could I think of such discourses? I thought, as I suppose an honest woman would think if a gallant should entertain her with suppositions of cases in which infidelity to her husband would be justifiable. Would not she naturally imagine, seeing no other foundation or motive for such conversation, that, if he could once get her to admit the general principle, his intended next step would be to persuade her that such a case actually existed? Thus, knowing your dislike of France, and your strong desire of recovering America to England, I was impressed with the idea that such an infidelity on our part would not be disagreeable to you; and that you were therefore aiming to lessen in my mind the horror I conceived at the idea of it. But we will finish here by mutually agreeing that neither you were capable of proposing nor I of acting on, such principles.

I cannot, however, forbear endeavoring to give a little possible utility to this letter, by saying something on your case of Dunkirk. You do not see why two nations should be deemed natural enemies to each other. Nor do I, unless one or both of them are naturally mischievous and insolent. But I can see how enmities long continued, even during a peace tend to shorten that peace, and to rekindle a war; and this is, when either party, having an advantage in war, shall exact conditions in the treaty of peace that are goading and constantly mortifying to the other. I take this to be the case of your "commissioner at Dunkirk." What would be your feelings, if France should take and hold possession of

Portsmouth, or Spain of Plymouth, after a peace, as you formerly held Calais, and now hold Gibraltar? Or, on restoring your ports, should insist on having an insolent commissioner stationed there, to forbid your placing one stone upon another by way of fortification? You would probably not be very easy under such a stipulation. If therefore you desire a peace that may be *firm* and durable, think no more of such extravagant demands. It is not necessary to give my opinion further on that point, yet I may add frankly, as this is merely private conversation between you and me, that I do think a faithful ally, especially when under obligations for such great and generous assistance as we have received, should fight as long as he is able, to prevent, as far as his continuing to fight may prevent, his friends being compelled again to suffer such an insult.

My dear friend, the true pains you are taking to restore peace, whatever may be the success, entitle you to the esteem of all good men. If your ministers really desire peace, methinks they would do well to *empower* some person to make propositions for that purpose. One or other of the parties at war must take the first step. To do this belongs properly to the wisest. America, being a novice in such affairs, has no pretence to that character; and, indeed, after the answer given by Lord Stormont (when we proposed to him something relative to the mutual treatment of prisoners with humanity), that "*the king's ministers receive no applications from rebels, unless when they come to implore his Majesty's clemency*," it cannot be expected that we should hazard

the exposing ourselves again to such insolence.[1] All I can say further at present is that in my opinion your enemies do not aim at your destruction, and that if you propose a treaty you will find them reasonable in their demands, provided that on your side they meet with the same good dispositions.

[1] The reference here is to a correspondence between the American Commissioners and Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador at the Court of France, soon after Dr. Franklin arrived at Paris, as contained in the following letters to Lord Stormont:

"Paris, 23 February, 1777.

"My Lord:—Captain Wickes, of the *Reprisal* frigate, belonging to the United States of America, has now in his hands near one hundred British seamen, prisoners. He desires to know whether an exchange may be made with him for an equal number of American seamen, now prisoners in England. We take the liberty of proposing this matter to your lordship, and of requesting your opinion (if there be no impropriety in your giving it), whether such an exchange will probably be agreed to by your court.

"If your people cannot be soon exchanged here, they will be sent to America. We have the honor to be, with great respect, your lordship's most obedient, humble servants, "B. Franklin,

"S. Deane."

"Paris, 2 April, 1777.

"My Lord:—We did ourselves the honor of writing some time ago to your lordship on the subject of exchanging prisoners. You did not condescend to give us any answer, and therefore we expect none to this. We, however, take the liberty of sending you copies of certain depositions, which we shall transmit to Congress, whereby it will be known to your court that the United States are not unacquainted with the barbarous treatment their people receive, when they have the misfortune of being your prisoners here in Europe; and that, if your conduct towards us is not altered, it is not unlikely that severe reprisals may be thought justifiable, from the necessity of putting some check to such abominable practices.

"For the sake of humanity, it is to be wished that men would endeavor to alleviate, as much as possible, the unavoidable miseries attending a state of war. It has been said that, among the civilized nations of Europe, the ancient horrors of that state are much diminished; but the compelling men by chains, stripes, and famine to fight against their friends and relations, is a new mode of barbarity which your nation alone had the honor of inventing; and the sending Ameri-

But do not dream of dividing us; you will certainly never be able to effect it. With great regard and affection, I am ever, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

MXXXIV

FROM EDMUND BURKE [1]

PASSY, 28 February, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—Your most obliging letter demanded an early answer. It has not received the acknow-

can prisoners of war to Africa and Asia, remote from all probability of exchange, and where they can scarce hope ever to hear from their families, even if the unwholesomeness of the climate does not put a speedy end to their lives, is a manner of treating captives that you can justify by no other precedent of custom, except that of the black savages of Guinea. We are your lordship's most obedient, humble servants,

"B. FRANKLIN,
"S. DEANE."

"PARIS, 3 April, 1777.

"MY LORD:—In answer to a letter, which concerns some of the most material interests of humanity, and of the two nations, Great Britain and the United States of America, now at war, we received the enclosed *indecent* paper, as coming from your lordship, which we return for your lordship's more mature consideration.

"B. FRANKLIN,
"S. DEANE."

The words of the paper sent by Lord Stormont, and referred to in the above letter, were: "The king's ambassador receives no applications from rebels, unless they come to implore his Majesty's mercy." —EDITOR.

[1] This letter was written in answer to one from Dr. Franklin, requesting Mr. Burke to negotiate an exchange of Henry Laurens, then in the Tower, for General Burgoyne. Mr. Laurens was at the time under some misapprehension in supposing that Mr. Burke first applied to Dr. Franklin to effect such an exchange, and imagined that Dr. Franklin had neglected him, whereas he took the most prompt and efficient means in his power to procure Mr. Laurens' release. See Henry Laurens's letter, dated May 30, 1782, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. II., p. 463.

ledgment which was so justly due to it. But Providence has well supplied my deficiencies, and the delay of the answer has made it much more satisfactory than at the time of my receipt of your letter I dared to promise myself it could be. I congratulate you, as the friend of America—I trust, as not the enemy of England; I am sure, as the friend of mankind,—on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of nineteen, at two o'clock this morning, in a very full house. It was the declaration of two hundred and thirty-four. I think it was the opinion of the whole. I trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to general peace, and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large. I most sincerely congratulate you on the event. I wish I could say that I had accomplished my commission. Difficulties remain. But as Mr. Laurens is released from his confinement, and has recovered his health tolerably, he may wait, I hope, without a great deal of inconvenience, for the final adjustment of his troublesome business. He is an exceedingly agreeable and honorable man. I am much obliged to you for the honor of his acquaintance. He speaks of you as I do, and is perfectly sensible of your warm and friendly interposition in his favor. I have the honor to be, with the highest possible esteem and regard, dear sir, your most faithful and obedient humble servant, EDMUND BURKE.

P. S.—General Burgoyne presents his best compliments to you, with his thanks for your obliging attentions towards him.

MXXXV

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

PASSY, 3 March, 1782.

SIR:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, the 24th past, enclosing an official paper on the part of the Danish court, relating to the burning of some English vessels on the coast of Norway by three American ships.[1] I shall not fail to transmit the same immediately to the Congress, who will, I make no doubt, inquire into the facts alleged, and do thereupon what shall appear to be just and right, it being their constant and earnest desire to avoid giving any offence to neutral nations, as will appear by their instructions to all armed vessels, of which I have the honor to present a copy.

In the meantime, as it is natural to expect that those who exact a rigorous observation of the laws of nations should be themselves ready to show an example of their own regard for those laws, where the interest of others is concerned, I cannot but hope the court of Denmark will at length attend to a demand, long since made by me, but hitherto without effect, that they would restore to the United States the value of three vessels, amounting to fifty

[1] M. de Bloome, Danish Minister in France, had complained to the Count de Vergennes that three American vessels, all armed in Philadelphia, had seized and burned two English merchantmen on the coast of Norway, and sunk them after plundering them and sending away their crews. They had no sea papers or letters of marque from Congress. Bloome asked the intervention of Count de Vergennes to effect not only the punishment of the malefactors, but to obtain from the United States an indemnification for the vessels and cargoes.

thousand pounds sterling.[1] These vessels were fair and good prizes, which had been made by our ships of war, not on the coast of Denmark, but far distant on the high seas, and were sent into Bergen as into a port truly neutral, but there, contrary to the laws of hospitality, as well as the other laws of nations, they were forcibly wrested out of our hands by the government of that place, and delivered back to our enemies. The Congress have not lost sight of this violence, but constantly expect justice from the equity and wisdom of his Danish Majesty. I am, with the greatest respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXXVI

TO HON. ROBERT MORRIS

Passy, 4 March, 1782.

Sir:—With this you will receive copies of my two letters dated January 28th and another dated the 30th. Since which I have been continually in perplexity and uncertainty about our money affairs. I obtained a sketch of the account mentioned in my last. You will see by letters I enclose that I endeavored to correct it, and make it 2,216,000 livres more in our favor, but without success. I pressed to know whether we were to expect any pecuniary aids this year or not; our friend, the Marquis, assisted me much. The affair was some time in suspense. At length the minister told me we should be

[1] Vessels captured by the squadron under Paul Jones. See Dr. Franklin's letter to Count Bernstorff on this subject.

aided, but must not expect it to be in the same proportion as last year. Friday last he was so good as to inform me we should have six millions, paid quarterly, of which 1,500,000 livres would be ready for us at the end of this month. I shall now be able to face the loan-office and other bills, and my acceptances in favor of Mr. Beaumarchais, and I will do as much as I can out of the 6,000,000 towards fulfilling your orders of paying and depositing money in other hands. But when you observe that the Dutch loan, which you conceive might be entire with me and at your disposition, has suffered such large deductions, you will not expect much; and your hopes of twelve millions for the present year falling short by one half (as far as appears at present) you will arrange your affairs accordingly and prevail on our people, if possible, to do more for themselves.

The supplies charged in the *aperçu* or sketch were part of them sent in king's transports in May and June last, and I understood the rest were to be forwarded in the same way; but the loss of a number of transports taken, which required replacing, has created a difficulty which I was but lately informed of; and I have had notice to provide ships for our goods, the king not having sufficient. Mr. Barclay being in Holland, I wrote to Nantes and L'Orient, but could obtain no freight there; at the same time I sent orders to Capt. Barry to go to Brest, where the goods were assembled, and take in what he could. He was gone on a cruise before my letters reached him. On Friday I acquainted the Marquis de Castries that I could not obtain any vessels, and en-

treated his assisting us, which he was kind enough to promise, as far as he was able. We have about 1,000 ton to send, and he supposes the *Alliance* may take 400 of it, in which case he will try to find place for the rest.

Mr. Barclay, as I mentioned above, is still in Holland, endeavoring to ship the goods unhappily purchased there last year. The whole were at first detained from us on pretence of damages due to the owners of the ships left behind by Gillon, who, by agreement, should have taken them under his convoy. We at length recovered those purchased by Messrs. de Neufville, but those purchased of Gillon himself are stopped for his debt; and though I accepted and paid the bills for the purchase, according to the agreement between him and Colonel Laurens, I just learn from Mr. Barclay that they are now not to be had without paying for them over again. If that man ever arrives in America, he should be immediately called to account for his conduct, but by his touching at Teneriffe, I fear he is gone elsewhere. I send you herewith one copy of our public accounts, and shall send another by the Marquis de Lafayette, who will probably go the beginning of next month. I propose to get Mr. Barclay, if I can, to examine them with the vouchers, but I send those copies at present that you may see what abundance of calls there are on me, of which, by your imagining so much in my hands, you appear to have had no idea. The expenditure of the sums here will be easily examined and ascertained. For those sums being always received in the first instance by our banker,

and he disbursing none but in payment of bills of exchange accepted by me, or on written orders expressing on what account the order is drawn, the inspectors will readily see whether the articles agree with those bills or orders and accounts.

Relying on Captain Barry's complying with my orders to go to Brest, take in what he could of our goods, and sail with the convoy, which does not go till towards the end of this month, I delayed answering your letters fully till I should obtain some certainty relating to our money affairs. But I have just received a letter from him, acquainting me with his return from an unsuccessful cruise, and his resolution to depart for America immediately after the return of the post. It seems he had not, when he wrote, received my letter directing him to call at Brest. I write to him again to the same purpose; but as he may nevertheless determine to return directly, I cannot now add to this letter, but must refer you to what I shall write by the Marquis. With greatest and most sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—By the 15th of this month another million of the Dutch loan will be consumed in paying bills, etc., so that I fear it will be difficult for me to pay those in favor of Mr. Ross, but I will try.

MXXXVII

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Passy, 4 March, 1782.

Sir:—Since I wrote the two short letters, of which I herewith send you copies, I have been honored with yours, dated the 16th of December.[1]

Enclosed I send two letters from Count de Vergennes, relating to certain complaints from Ostend and Copenhagen against our cruisers. I formerly forwarded a similar complaint from Portugal, to which I have yet received no answer. The ambassador of that country frequently teases me for it. I hope now that, by your means, this kind of affairs will be more immediately attended to; ill blood and mischief may be thereby sometimes prevented.

The Marquis de Lafayette was at his return hither received by all ranks with all possible distinction. He daily gains in the general esteem and affection, and promises to be a great man here. He is warmly attached to our cause; we are on the most friendly and confidential footing with each other, and he is really very serviceable to me in my applications for additional assistance.

I have done what I could in recommending Messieurs Duportail and Gouvion, as you desired. I did it with pleasure, as I have much esteem for them.

I will endeavor to procure a sketch of an emblem for the purpose you mention. This puts me in mind of a medal I have had a mind to strike, since the late great event you gave me an account of,

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 258.

representing the United States by the figure of an infant Hercules in his cradle, strangling the two serpents; and France by that of Minerva, sitting by as his nurse, with her spear and helmet, and her robe specked with a few *fleurs de lis*. The extinguishing of two entire armies in one war is what has rarely happened, and it gives a presage of the future force of our growing empire.[1]

I thank you much for the newspapers you have been so kind as to send me. I send also to you, by every opportunity, packets of the French, Dutch, and English papers. Enclosed is the last *Courier of Europe*, wherein you will find a late curious debate on continuing the war in America, which the minister carried in the affirmative only by his own vote. It seems the nation is sick of it, but the king is obstinate. *There is a change made of the American Secretary*, and another is talked of in the room of Lord Sandwich. But I suppose we have no reason to desire such changes. If the king will have a war with us, his old servants are as well for us as any he is likely to put in their places. The ministry, you will see, declare that the war in America is for the future to be only *defensive*. I hope we shall be too prudent to have the least dependence on this

[1] This medal was subsequently executed, under the direction of Dr. Franklin, with some variations in the device. On one side is an infant in his cradle strangling two serpents. Minerva, as the emblem of France, with her spear, helmet, and shield, is engaged in a contest with the British lion. The motto is, NON SINE DIIS ANIMOSUS INFANS; under which are the dates of the two victories at Saratoga and Yorktown, "17 Oct. 1777," and "19 Oct. 1781." On the other side of the medal is a head of Liberty; in the exergue, LIBERTAS AMERICANA, and the date of American independence, "4 Jul. 1776."

declaration. It is only thrown out to lull us; for, depend upon it, the king hates us cordially, and will be content with nothing short of our extirpation.

I shall be glad to receive the account you are preparing, of the wanton damages done our possessions. I wish you could also furnish me with one, of the barbarities committed on our people. They may both be of excellent use on certain occasions. I received the duplicate of yours in cipher. Hereafter, I wish you would use that in which those instructions were written that relate to the future peace. I am accustomed to that, and I think it very good and more convenient in practice.

The friendly disposition of this court towards us continues. We have sometimes pressed a little too hard, expecting and demanding, perhaps, more than we ought, and have used improper arguments, which may have occasioned a little dissatisfaction, but it has not been lasting. In my opinion, the surest way to obtain liberal help from others is vigorously to help ourselves. People fear assisting the negligent, the indolent, and the careless, lest the aids they afford should be lost. I know we have done a great deal; but it is said we are apt to be supine after a little success, and too backward in furnishing our contingents. This is really a generous nation, fond of glory, and particularly that of protecting the oppressed. Trade is not the admiration of their noblesse, who always govern here. Telling them their *commerce* will be advantaged by our success, and that it is their *interest* to help us, seems as much as to say, "Help us, and we shall not be obliged to

you." Such indiscreet and improper language has been sometimes held here by some of our people, and produced no good effects.

The constant harmony subsisting between the armies of the two nations in America is a circumstance that has afforded me infinite pleasure. It should be carefully cultivated. I hope nothing will happen to disturb it. The French officers who have returned to France this winter speak of our people in the handsomest and kindest manner; and there is a strong desire in many of the young noblemen to go over to fight for us; there is no restraining some of them; and several changes among the officers of their army have lately taken place in consequence.

You must be so sensible of the utility of maintaining a perfect good understanding with the Chevalier de la Luzerne that I need say nothing on that head. The affairs of a distant people in any court of Europe will always be much affected by the representations of the minister of that court residing among them.

We have here great quantities of supplies of all kinds ready to be sent over, and which would have been on their way before this time, if the unlucky loss of the transports that were under M. de Guichen and other demands for more ships had not created a difficulty to find freight for them. I hope, however, that you will receive them with the next convoy.

The accounts we have of the economy introduced by Mr. Morris begin to be of service to us here, and will by degrees obviate the inconvenience that an opinion of our disorders and mismanagements had occasioned. I inform him by this conveyance of the

money aids we shall have this year. The sum is not so great as we could wish; and we must so much the more exert ourselves. A small increase of industry in every American, male and female, with a small diminution of luxury, would produce a sum far superior to all we can hope to beg or borrow from all our friends in Europe.

There are now near a thousand of our brave fellows prisoners in England, many of whom have patiently endured the hardships of that confinement several years, resisting every temptation to serve our enemies. Will not your late great advantages put it in your power to do something for their relief? The slender supply I have been able to afford, of a shilling a week to each, for their greater comfort during the winter, amounts weekly to fifty pounds sterling. An exchange would make so many of our countrymen happy, add to our strength, and diminish our expense. But our privateers who cruise in Europe will not be at the trouble of bringing in their prisoners, and I have none to exchange for them.

Generals Cornwallis and Arnold are both arrived in England. It is reported that the former in all his conversations discourages the prosecution of the war in America; if so, he will, of course, be out of favor. We hear much of audiences given to the latter, and of his being present at councils.

You desire to know whether any intercepted letters of Mr. Deane have been published in Europe? I have seen but one in the English papers—that to Mr. Wadsworth,—and none in any of the French and Dutch papers; but some may have been printed

that have not fallen in my way. There is no doubt of their being all genuine. His conversation since his return from America has, as I have been informed, gone gradually more and more into that style, and at length come to an open vindication of Arnold's conduct; and within these few days he has sent me a letter of twenty full pages, recapitulating those letters, and threatening to write and publish an account of the treatment he has received from Congress, etc. He resides at Ghent, is distressed both in mind and circumstances, raves and writes abundance, and I imagine it will end in his going over to join his friend Arnold in England. I had an exceeding good opinion of him when he acted with me, and I believe he was then sincere and hearty in our cause. But he is changed, and his character ruined in his own country and in this, so that I see no other but England to which he can now retire. He says that we owe him about twelve thousand pounds sterling; and his great complaint is that we do not settle his accounts and pay him. Mr. Johnston having declined the service, I proposed engaging Mr. Searle to undertake it; but Mr. Deane objected to him, as being his enemy. In my opinion he was for that reason even fitter for the service of Mr. Deane; since accounts are of a mathematical nature and cannot be changed by an enemy, while that enemy's testimony that he had found them well supported by authentic vouchers would have weighed more than the same testimony from a friend.[1]

With regard to negotiations for a peace, I see but

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. I., p. 217.

little probability of their being entered upon seriously this year, unless the English minister has failed in raising his funds, which it is said he has secured; so that we must provide for another campaign, in which I hope God will continue to favor us, and humble our cruel and haughty enemies; a circumstance which, whatever Mr. Deane may say to the contrary, will give pleasure to all Europe.

This year opens well, by the reduction of Port Mahon, and the garrison prisoners of war, and we are not without hopes that Gibraltar may soon follow. A few more signal successes in America will do much towards reducing our enemies to reason. Your expressions of good opinion with regard to me, and wishes of my continuance in this employment, are very obliging. As long as the Congress think I can be useful to our affairs, it is my duty to obey their orders; but I should be happy to see them better executed by another, and myself at liberty, enjoying, before I quit the stage of life, some small degree of leisure and tranquillity. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXXVIII

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Passy, 9 March, 1782.

Sir:—I have just received the honor of yours dated January the 7th. Your communications of the sentiments of Congress, with regard to many

points that may come under consideration in a treaty of peace, give me great pleasure, and the more as they agree so perfectly with my own opinions, and furnish me with additional arguments in their support. I shall be more particular on this subject in my next; for, having notice from Captain Barry last night that he will not go to Brest, as I expected, to take in some of our goods, but will sail immediately on the return of the post, which sets out to-day, I am obliged to be short.

You will see in the enclosed newspapers the full debate in the House of Commons, on the subject of declining the war with North America. By private advices I learn that the whole opposition, now become the majority, went up in a body with the address to the king, who answered that he would pay a due regard to the advice of his faithful Commons, and employ his forces with more vigor against the ancient enemies of the nation, or to that purpose; and that orders were immediately given for taking up a great number of large transports, among which are many old India ships, whence it is conjectured that they intend some great effort in the West Indies, and perhaps mean to carry off their troops and stores from New York and Charleston. I hope, however, that we shall not, in expectation of this, relax in our preparations for the approaching campaign. I will procure the books you write for, and send them as soon as possible.

Present my duty to the Congress, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXXXIX

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 9 March, 1782.

SIR:—I have just received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 7th of January, with the duplicates of sundry others. By this conveyance you will be pretty fully informed of the state of our funds here, by which you will be enabled so to regulate your drafts as that our credit in Europe may not be ruined, and your friend killed with vexation.

The cargo of the *Marquis de Lafayette* is all replaced, and at Brest; but the late loss of transports has occasioned a difficulty in conveying them. You will see by the enclosed letter the measures I have taken and my disappointment. Capt. Barry *think* [*sic*] himself too much confined by your orders *at* allow himself to go to Brest as I desired; and as the Minister of the Marine was pleased with my intention, of employing that ship in taking a part (he hoped 400 tons), he promised to endeavor to help us in forwarding the rest; but when he sees that we will not help ourselves, but throw every burthen upon our friends, I fear it may put him out of humor. I find by experience that great affairs and great men are sometimes influenced by small matters, and that it is not good to differ with or disoblige them or even their secretaries. I have apprehended that the little misunderstanding between two persons in Philadelphia, of which you gave me an account, together with the refusal of allowing the Virginia supply, had for

some time an ill effect here. You will see on comparing my modest letter of the —— February, with the answer, that if I had replied, which I could easily have done, a dispute might have arisen out of it, in which, if I had got the better, I should perhaps have got nothing else. I have therefore pocketed several of the observations that are not well founded, and console myself for the present with 6,000,000 livres, relying on your promise that no more loan-office bills shall be drawn on me after the first of April.

I shall, I believe, be able [to] pay in due time the drafts in favor of Messrs. Ross & Bingham. As to Mr. Holker, if the debt you mention as due to him is for clothes, etc., sent to him by Mr. Chaumont, it may as well remain unpaid, Mr. Chaumont having refused to pay me about 70,000 livres on account of the neglect of Congress to discharge a demand he held against them, made by Mr. Holker. Goods of his, delivered at Charlestown to General Lincoln, for th use of the troops, are mentioned by him as still unpaid for.

I congratulate you on the success of the banks. I have written to Mr. Bache to interest me in a share.

You will see by the English papers which I send to Mr. Secretary Livingston, that the sense of the nation is now fully against the continuance of the American war. The petitions of the cities of London and Bristol were unanimous against it; Lord North mustered all his force, yet had a majority against him of nineteen. It is said there were but two who voted with him that are not placemen or pensioners,

and that even these, in their private conversations, condemn the prosecution of the war, and lay it all upon the king's obstinacy. We must not, however, be lulled by these appearances. That nation is changeable. And though somewhat humbled at present, a little success may make them as insolent as ever. I remember that, when I was a boxing boy, it was allowed, even after an adversary said he had enough, to give him a rising blow. Let ours be a douser.

With great regard and esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—Your fine boys are well and just by me.

MXL

TO JOHN JAY

PASSY, 16 March, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I have received your several favors of January 30th, February 11th, and March 1st, and propose to write fully to you by the next post. In the meantime this line may serve to acquaint you that I paid duly all your former bills drawn in favor of M. Cabarrus, and that, having obtained a promise of six millions for this year, to be paid me quarterly, I now see that I shall be able to pay your drafts for discharging the sums you may be obliged to borrow for paying those upon you; in which, however, I wish you to give me as much time as you can, dividing them so that they may not come upon me at

once. Interest should be allowed your friends who advance for you. Please to send me a complete list of all the bills you have accepted, their numbers and dates, marking which are paid, and what are still to pay.

I congratulate you upon the change of sentiments in the British nation. It has been intimated to me from thence that they are willing to make a separate peace with us, exclusive of France, Spain, and Holland, which, so far as relates to France, is impossible; and I believe they will be content that we leave them the other two; but Holland is stepping towards us, and I am not without hopes of a second loan there. And, since Spain does not think our friendship worth cultivating, I wish you would inform me of the whole sum we owe her, that we may think of some means of paying it off speedily. With sincerest regard, I am, etc., B. Franklin.

MXLI

FROM DAVID HARTLEY

London, 21 March, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—You will have heard before this can reach you that Lord North declared yesterday in the House of Commons that his Majesty intended to change his ministers. The House is adjourned for a few days to give time for the formation of a new ministry. Upon this occasion, therefore, I must apply to you, to know whether you would wish me to transfer the late negotiation to the successors of the late ministry; in these terms (*vide*

yours to me of January 15, 1782), viz.: "that you are empowered by a special commission to treat of peace, whenever a negotiation for that purpose shall be opened; that it must be always understood that it is to be in conjunction with your allies, conformable to the solemn treaties made with them; that the formal acknowledgment of the independence of America is not made necessary." And may I add, that upon these terms you are disposed to enter into a negotiation? It is not known who will succeed the late ministry; but, from the circumstances which preceded its dissolution, we are to hope that they will be disposed to enter into a negotiation of peace upon fair and honorable terms. I have no doubt that there were some persons in the late ministry of that disposition.

I told you in my last letters to you, of the 11th and 12th instant, that I had received information, whilst I was in the course of correspondence with the ministry myself, on the subject of peace, that some part of the ministry were transmitting some communications or inquiries upon that subject to Mr. Adams, unknown to me. I had informed the ministry, from you, of the names of the four persons empowered to treat. I saw the minister upon the occasion. (I should now call him the late minister.) I took the liberty of giving him my opinion upon the matter itself. So far as it related personally to me, I expressed myself fully to him that there was no occasion that such a step should have been taken unknown to me, for that I was very free to confess that, if they thought my partiality towards peace

was so strong that they could drive a better bargain through another channel, I could not have any right of exclusion upon them.

I relate this to you because I would wish to have you make a corresponding application to your own case. If you should think *that my strong desire for peace*, although *most laudable and virtuous in itself, should mislead me*, and that my being, as you may suppose, misled, may be of any prejudice to the cause committed to your trust, I desire by no means to embarrass your free conduct by any considerations of private or personal regard to myself. Having said thus much, I will now add that I am not unambitious of the office of a peacemaker; that I flatter myself the very page which I am now writing will bear full testimony, from both sides, of the impartiality of my conduct. And I will add once more, what I have often said and repeated to each side, viz., that no fallacy or deception, knowing or suspecting it to be such, shall ever pass through my hands.

Believe me, I sympathize most cordially and sincerely with you in every anxiety of yours for peace. I hope things are tending, although not without rubs, yet in the main, to that end soon; as soon as the course of human life may be expected to operate on the great scale and course of national events, or rather in the creation and establishment of a new world. I am sometimes tempted to think myself in patient expectation the elder sage of the two; I say the elder, not the better. Yours, etc.,

D. Hartley.

MXLII

TO M. DE RAYNEVAL

PASSY, 22 March, 1782.

SIR:—With this I have the honor of sending you *all the letters* I have received from or written to England on the subject of peace. M. de Vergennes should have seen them sooner, if I had imagined them of any importance; for I have never had the least desire or intention of keeping such correspondence secret. I was, as you will see, accidentally drawn into this, and, conceiving it of no use, I have been backward in continuing it.

I send you also some papers which show the attentive care of the Congress respecting the laws of nations, and which were intended to accompany my letter relating to Denmark, but then omitted.

Herewith you will also receive the vote of Congress empowering the Commissioners to borrow money.

With great esteem I have the honor to be, sir, yours, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MXLIII

TO MR. WILLIAMS

PASSY, 23 March, 1782.

DEAR JONATHAN:—I have received yours of the 19th instant, with the account of the duties you have paid. I do not comprehend the policy of burthening their own manufactures, but the laws of the country we trade with must be observed.

I have determined to rely on the government entirely for the transport of the goods. I am instructed not to send them but under convoy directly

to Philadelphia, and I cannot trust myself in making bargains for ships, being too ignorant in such matters. Particularly I will enter into no such bargain with my cousin. If it should prove a hard one for you, it would hurt my feelings of friendship; and if a profitable one, I shall be reflected on as having given you a lucrative job at the expense of the public. I believe the government would still take more ships if offered soon, so that you may there find employ for the ships you propose to buy, if you like the terms. Our occasions are not so pressing as to justify my giving extravagant freights. By advices from America it appears that our army was provided with clothing for this year; that the cargo of the *Marquis de Lafayette* was arrived at Philadelphia from St. Thomas, and lay upon the hands of the importers; the arms taken with Cornwallis, and large quantity arrived at Boston, put us at our ease on that article; and we have therefore more than a year before us to get our goods over. Mr. Morris writes me that he is sorry the purchase has been made, and wishes the value had still remained in money at our disposal; so I can only thank you for your offer, and decline it.

I hope the seeds will arrive soon, or the season of planting will be lost, and they become useless. Billy will send you the paper and ink powder. My love to the good wife, and believe me ever

Your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—The St. Domingo fleet, if it arrives, will furnish a good many ships.

MXLIV

FROM JOHN ADAMS

The Hague, 26 March, 1782.

Sir:—One day last week I received at Amsterdam a card from Mr. Digges, enclosing two letters to me from David Hartley. The card desired to see me upon business of importance; and the letters from Mr. Hartley contained an assurance that to his knowledge the bearer came from the highest authority. I answered the card that in the present situation of affairs here and elsewhere it was impossible for me to see any one from England without witness; but if he were willing to see me in the presence of Mr. Thaxter, my secretary, and that I should communicate whatever he should say to me to Dr. Franklin and the Count de Vergennes, I should wait for him at home at ten o'clock; but that I had rather he should go to Paris without seeing me, and communicate what he had to say to Dr. Franklin, whose situation enabled him to consult the court without any loss of time. At ten, however, he came, and told me a long story about consultations with Mr. Penn, Mr. Hartley, Lord Beauchamp, and at last Lord North, by whom he was finally sent to inquire of me if I or any other had authority to treat with Great Britain of a truce. I answered that "I came to Europe with full powers to make peace; that those powers had been announced to the public upon my arrival, and continued in force until last summer, when Congress sent a new commission, containing the same powers, to four persons, whom I

named; that if the king of England were my father, and I the heir apparent to his throne, I could not advise him ever to think of a truce, because it would be but a real war under a simulated appearance of tranquillity, and would end in another open and bloody war, without doing any real good to any of the parties."

He said that "the ministry would send some person of consequence over, perhaps General Conway, but they were apprehensive that he would be ill treated or exposed." I said "that, if they resolved upon such a measure, I had rather they would send immediately to Dr. Franklin, because of his situation near the French court. But there was no doubt, if they sent any respectable personage, properly authorized, who should come to treat honorably, he would be treated with great respect; but that, if he came to me, I could give him no opinion upon any thing without consulting my colleagues, and should reserve a right of communicating every thing to them, and to our allies."

He then said that "his mission was finished; that the fact to be ascertained was simply that there was a commission in Europe to treat and conclude; but that there was not one person in Great Britain who could affirm or prove that there was such a commission, although it had been announced in the gazettes."

I desired him, and he promised me, not to mention Mr. Laurens to the ministry without his consent (and without informing him that it was impossible he should say any thing in the business, because

he knew nothing of our instructions), because, although it was possible that his being in such a commission might induce them to release him, yet it was also possible it might render them more difficult concerning his exchange.

The picture he gives of the situation of things in England is gloomy enough for them. The distresses of the people, and the distractions in administration and Parliament, are such as may produce any effect, almost, that can be imagined.

The only use of all this, I think, is to strike the decisive strokes at New York and Charleston. There is no position so advantageous for negotiation as when we have all an enemy's army prisoners. I must beg the favor of you, sir, to send me, by one of the Count de Vergennes' couriers to the Duc de la Vauguyon, a copy in letters of your peace instructions. I have not been able to decipher one quarter part of mine. Some mistake has certainly been made.

Ten or eleven cities in Holland have declared themselves in favor of American independence; and it is expected that to-day, or to-morrow, this province will take the decisive resolution of admitting me to my audience. Perhaps some of the other provinces may delay it for three or four weeks. But the prince has declared that he has no hopes of resisting the torrent, and, *therefore*, that he shall not attempt it.[1] The Duc de la Vauguyon has acted a

[1] Mr. Adams was admitted to an audience of the Prince of Orange on the 22d of April, when he presented his letter of credence from Congress, and was recognized by the prince as Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States. The next day the French ambassador made an entertainment, at which all the foreign ministers were present, and

very friendly and honorable part in this business, without, however, doing any ministerial act in it. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

MXLV

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 30 March, 1782.

SIR:—With this, if it comes to hand, you will receive copies of several preceding letters to you, which went by the *Alliance*, Captain Barry, who sailed the 15th, without taking any of our supplies, conceiving his vessel not fit for such service, and I am still uncertain whether any part can go by the convoy. If the St. Domingo fleet, which has long been expected, were arrived, transports would not be so scarce. Captain Barry tells me there is abundance of arms and ammunition at Boston, and the capture of Cornwallis having furnished more, I hope those articles will not be much wanted. I have also been informed that the cargo of clothing sent by the ship *Marquis de Lafayette* is arrived with you from neutral ports, and offered at a low price. If this be true, the unavoidable delay of goods we have here on hand will not on the whole be so prejudicial to our affairs. We do not, however, rely on these informations, but press continually for the aid of government to get them transported safely. Mr.

Mr. Adams was formally introduced to them. See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. VI., pp. 339, 342.

Barclay is still in Holland, endeavoring to ship the unfortunate purchase left there by Gillon; and if his ships go safe, you will be furnished from thence with something considerable.

Since my last I have paid in Holland a number of bills of exchange drawn in favor of Mr. Ross, amounting to 40,958 bank florins, and by that means prevented their protest. No demand has been made on me by Mr. Wm. Lee. I do not know where he is; and I think he did so little for the 3,000 guineas he received, that he may wait without much inconvenience for the addition. I have paid Captain Frey and taken the receipts you required. In the other dispositions you have ordered, I shall do the best I can.

Before I was sufficiently assured myself, or could assure Mr. Jay of having wherewithal to assist him in discharging his acceptances, I heard he had begun to suffer some of them to be protested. As soon as I found it was possible for me to assist him, I wrote to him to draw upon me for the sum he wanted, being near thirty thousand pounds sterling, which will put a stop to those protests, and enable him to pay honorably.

By the newspapers I send to Mr. Secretary Livingston you will see the change of sentiment respecting us in the English nation. I do not know whether this will diminish your expense for the coming campaign, because while they have an army in our country I do not think their proposed inactivity is to be trusted, though it is said that after such resolutions of Parliament no minister will dare to order offensive operations. Their papers say that orders are given

both in England and Ireland to stop the embarkation of troops intended for North America; but what I rely on more, is some information I have just received from Germany, that the march of recruits there to the seaside is also countermanded. If from what *it is their interest to do*, one could conclude what *they will do*, I should imagine that, alarmed with the loss of St. Christopher, they would withdraw their troops from the continent in order to defend their remaining islands. But this ministry have hitherto so constantly acted contrary to the true interest of their nation, and so inconsistently with common reason and judgment that one cannot fairly draw such a conclusion.

The goods for replacing the cargo of the *Marquis de Lafayette* had been purchased long before we knew that you could have wished it otherwise. I hope the invoice you sent me of goods to be bought by Messrs. Barclay & Ridley will be partly rendered unnecessary by the purchase, because I see no possibility of paying the sum required for the invoice, viz., near two millions, having received the most explicit and positive assurances that more money than I have mentioned cannot this year be obtained.

Permit me to hope also, and for the same reason, that the bills you will find yourself obliged to draw on me may not amount to a very large sum. Hitherto I have accepted and paid all drafts upon myself, and enabled my colleagues to discharge those upon them, with punctuality and honor, the few above mentioned on Mr. Jay only excepted. I wish to finish this part of my employment with the credit I have

hitherto supported both for myself and for my constituents. I must in June next pay Mr. Beaumarchais near 2,500,000 livres. I have often been in great distress and suffered much anxiety. I still dread at times the same situation; but your promise that after this month no more bills shall be drawn on me keeps up my spirits and affords me the greatest satisfaction.

I am extremely pleased with the various prudent measures you have with so much industry put in practice to draw forth our internal strength. I hope they will be attended with the success they merit, and I thank you for the communication.

Our former friend, Mr. Deane, has lost himself entirely. He and his letters are universally condemned. He cannot well return hither, and I think hardly to America. I see no place for him but England. He continues, however, to sit croaking at Ghent, chagrined, discontented, and dispirited. You will see by the enclosed what Mr. Barclay says of his accounts. Methinks it would be well to have them examined, and to give orders for the payment of what is found justly due to him. Whether the commission he charges on the purchases made by Mr. Beaumarchais comes under that description, I cannot say; the Congress will judge.

I will endeavor to send the books with the Marquis, who does not go yet for three or four weeks. I shall write further by that opportunity. At present I can only add that I am ever, with the sincerest esteem and respect, dear sir, your, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXLVI

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PASSY, 30 March, 1782.

SIR:—In mine of the 9th instant I acknowledged the receipt of yours of January 7th, and I have not since received any of later date. The newspapers which I send you by this conveyance will acquaint you with what has since my last passed in Parliament. You will there see a copy of the bill brought in by the attorney-general for empowering the king to make peace with the colonies. They still seem to flatter themselves with the idea of dividing us; and, rather than name the Congress, they empower him generally to treat with any *body or bodies of men, or any person or persons*, etc. They are here likewise endeavoring to get us to treat separately from France; at the same time they are tempting France to treat separately from us; equally without the least chance of success. I have been drawn into a correspondence on this subject, which you shall have with my next.

I send you a letter of Mr. Adams', just received, which shows also that they are weary of the war, and would get out of it if they knew how. They had not then received the certain news of the loss of St. Christopher's, which will probably render them still more disposed to peace. I see that a bill is also passing through the House of Commons for the exchange of American prisoners, the purport of which I do not yet know.

In my last I promised to be more particular with

respect to the points you mentioned as proper to be insisted on in the treaty of peace. My ideas on those points are, I assure you, full as strong as yours. I did intend to give you my reasons for some addition, and if the treaty were to be held on your side of the water I would do it; otherwise, it seems on second thoughts to be unnecessary, and, if my letter should be intercepted, may be inconvenient. Be assured I shall not willingly give up any important right or interest of our country, and, unless this campaign should afford our enemies some considerable advantage, I hope more may be obtained than is yet expected.

I have purchased for you all the books you desired except four, which we have sent for to England. I shall request our excellent friend, the Marquis de Lafayette, to take them under his care, and I hope they will get safe to hand. The others shall follow by the first opportunity after I receive them.

Our affairs go on, generally, well in Europe. Holland has been slow; Spain slower; but time will, I hope, smooth away all difficulties. Let us keep up not only our courage but our vigilance, and not be laid asleep by the pretended half peace the English make with us without asking our consent. We cannot be safe while they keep armies in our country. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXLVII

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 31 March, 1782.

SIR:—I received yours of the 10th instant, and am of opinion, with you, that the English will evacuate New York and Charleston; as the troops there, after the late resolutions of Parliament, must be useless, and are necessary to defend their remaining islands, where they have not at present more than three thousand men. The prudence of this operation is so obvious, that I think they can hardly miss it; otherwise, I own that, considering their conduct for several years past, it is not reasoning consequentially to conclude they will do a thing because the doing it is required by common-sense.

Yours of the 26th is just come to hand. I thank you for the communication of Digges' message. He has also sent me a long letter,[1] with two from Mr. Hartley. I shall see M. de Vergennes to-morrow, and will acquaint you with every thing material that passes on the subject. But the ministry, by whom Digges pretends to be sent, being changed, we shall, by waiting a little, see what tone will be taken by their successors. You shall have a copy of the instructions by the next courier. I congratulate you

[1] Mr. Digges said in his letter, that he was sent at the instance of the British ministry to ascertain "whether any person or persons in Europe were commissioned by Congress to treat for peace, whether they were now willing to avail themselves of such commission, and of the sincere disposition of the ministry to treat, and whether they would receive an appointed commissioner to speak for a truce, and mention the place for a meeting. See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 320.

cordially on the progress you have made among those slow people. Slow however as they are, Mr. Jay finds his [1] much slower. By an American, who goes in about ten days to Holland, I shall send you a packet of correspondence with Mr. Hartley, though it amounts to little.

With great esteem, I have the honor to be your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MXLVIII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 31 March, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I have just received your favors of March the 11th and 12th, forwarded to me by Mr. Digges, and another of the 21st per post. I congratulate you on the returning good disposition of your nation towards America, which appears in the resolutions of Parliament that you have sent me; and I hope the change of your ministry will be attended with salutary effects. I continue in the same sentiments expressed in my former letters; but, as I am but one of five in the commission, and have no knowledge of the sentiments of the others, what has passed between us is to be considered merely as private conversation. The five persons are Messrs. Adams, Jay, Laurens, Jefferson, and myself; and, in case of death or absence of any, the remainder have power to act or conclude. I have not written to Mr.

[1] The Spaniards.

Laurens, having constantly expected him here, but shall write to him next post; when I shall also write more fully to you, having now only time to add that I am ever, with great esteem and affection, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MXLIX

TO MR. W. HODGSON

Passy, 31 March, 1782.

Sir:—It is long since I have been able to afford myself the pleasure of writing to you, but I have had that of receiving several letters from you, and I sent you in consequence a credit for £300, which I hope you received. I am sorry that you had been obliged to advance. The trouble you so kindly take is sufficient. I just hear from Ireland that there are 200 of our people prisoners there, who are destitute of every necessary, and die daily in numbers. You are about to have a new ministry, I hear. If a sincere reconciliation is desired, kindness to the captives on both sides may promote it greatly. I have no correspondent in Ireland. Can you put me in a way of sending those poor men some relief? And if you think the new ministry better disposed than the last, I wish you would lay before them the slighted proposition I formerly sent you, for the exchange of prisoners. I see in your newspapers that an act is passing through the House of Commons relative to that subject. I beg you would send me a copy of

the bill. Of the dispositions on your side towards peace or continuance of war, you must know more than me. I can only assure you of mine to finish this devilish contest as soon as possible; and I have not lost sight of your request.

B. Franklin.

ML

TO M. L'ABBÉ DE ST. FAVRE, PRIEUR DE ST. MARTIN

Passy, 31 March, 1782.

Sir:—I do not recollect that I have ever known or seen the person you mention; and it is certain that I never knew or heard that M. de Beaumarchais was charged with the payment of gratifications to those who had been prisoners of war, or that any such gratifications were allowed; so that I could not have sent any person to that gentleman for such purpose. I honor the goodness of your heart, and I ought not to permit by my silence your being imposed on by these deceivers. Success might encourage this young impostor to rely on such artifices for subsistence; he might by practice become more expert, and become a pest to society. Such frauds are vastly more pernicious than simple thefts, for they wrong not only the person deceived of the sum obtained, but they create a diffidence which prevents the relief of persons whose misfortunes and distress are real.

I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLI

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

PASSY, 2 April, 1782.

SIR:—I received duly the honor of your letter, accompanying the capitulation of General Cornwallis. All the world agree that no expedition was ever better planned or better executed; it has made a great addition to the military reputation you had already acquired, and brightens the glory that surrounds your name, and that must accompany it to our latest posterity. No news could possibly make me more happy. The infant Hercules has now strangled the two serpents [1] that attacked him in his cradle, and I trust his future history will be answerable.

This will be presented to you by the Count de Ségur.[2] He is son of the Marquis de Ségur, Minister of War, and our very good friend; but I need not claim your regards to the young gentleman on that score; his amiable personal qualities, his very sensible conversation, and his zeal for the cause of liberty will obtain and secure your esteem, and be better recommendation than any I can give him.

The English seem not to know either how to continue the war, or to make peace with us. Instead of entering into a regular treaty for putting an end to a contest they are tired of, they have voted in Parlia-

[1] Alluding to the surrender of the two British armies under Burgoyne and Cornwallis, October 17, 1777, and October 19, 1781.

[2] Afterwards for several years ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg. See Sparks's *Life of Ledyard*, 1st ed., pp. 191, 283.

ment that the recovery of America by force is impracticable, that an offensive war against us ought not to be continued, and that whoever advises it shall be deemed an enemy to his country.

Thus the garrisons of New York and Charleston, if continued there, must sit still, being only allowed to defend themselves. The ministry, not understanding or approving this making of peace by halves, have quitted their places; but we have no certain account here who is to succeed them, so that the measures likely to be taken are yet uncertain; probably we shall know something of them before the Marquis de Lafayette takes his departure. There are grounds for good hopes, however; but I think we should not therefore relax in our preparations for a vigorous campaign, as that nation is subject to sudden fluctuations; and, though somewhat humiliated at present, a little success in the West Indies may dissipate their present fears, recall their natural insolence, and occasion the interruption of negotiation, and a continuance of the war. We have great stores purchased here for the use of your army, which will be sent as soon as transports can be procured for them to go under good convoy.

My best wishes always have and always will attend you, being with the greatest and most sincere esteem and respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MLII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 5 April, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—I wrote a few lines to you the 31st past, and promised to write more fully. On perusing again your letters of the 11th, 12th, and 21st, I do not find any notice taken of one from me, dated February the 16th. I therefore now send you a copy made from it in the press. The uncertainty of free transmission discourages a free communication of sentiments on these important affairs; but the inutility of discussion between persons, one of whom is not authorized but in conjunction with others, and the other not authorized at all, as well as the obvious inconveniences that may attend such previous handling of points, that are to be considered when we come to treat regularly, is with me a still more effectual discouragement, and determines me to waive that part of the correspondence.

As to Digges, I have no confidence in him, nor in any thing he says, or may say, of his being sent by ministers. Nor will I have any communication with him, except in receiving and considering the justification of himself, which he pretends he shall be able and intends to make, for his excessive drafts on me, on account of the relief I have ordered to the prisoners, and his embezzlement of the money.

You justly observe, in yours of the 12th, that the first object is to procure a "meeting of qualified and authorized persons," and that you understand the ministry will be ready to proceed towards opening a

negotiation as soon as the bill shall pass, and therefore it is necessary to consult time and place, and manner and persons, on each side. This you wrote while the old ministry existed. If the new have the same intentions, and desire a general peace, they may easily discharge Mr. Laurens from those engagements which make his acting in the commission improper; and, except Mr. Jefferson, who remains in America, and is not expected here, we, the Commissioners of Congress, can easily be got together ready to meet yours, at such place as shall be agreed to by the powers at war, in order to form the treaty. God grant that there may be wisdom enough assembled to make, if possible, a peace that shall be perpetual, and that the idea of any nations being natural enemies to each other may be abolished, for the honor of human nature.

With regard to those who may be commissioned from your government, whatever personal preferences I may conceive in my own mind, it cannot become me to express them. I only wish for wise and honest men. With such, a peace may be speedily concluded. With contentious wranglers, the negotiation may be drawn into length, and finally frustrated.

I am pleased to see, in the votes and parliamentary speeches, and in your public papers, that, in mentioning America, the word *reconciliation* is often used. It certainly means more than a mere peace. It is a sweet expression. Revolve in your mind, my dear friend, the means of bringing about this *reconciliation*. When you consider the injustice of your

war with us, and the barbarous manner in which it has been carried on, the many suffering families among us from your burning of towns, scalping by savages, etc., etc., will it not appear to you that, though a cessation of the war may be a peace, it may not be a reconciliation? Will not some voluntary acts of justice, and even of kindness on your part, have excellent effects towards producing such a *reconciliation?* Can you not find means of repairing in some degree those injuries? You have in England and Ireland twelve hundred of our people prisoners, who have for years bravely suffered all the hardships of that confinement, rather than enter into your service, to fight against their country. Methinks you ought to glory in descendants of such virtue. What if you were to begin your measures of *reconciliation* by setting them at liberty? I know it would procure for you the liberty of an equal number of your people, even without a previous stipulation; and the confidence in our equity, with the apparent good-will in the action, would give very good impressions of your change of disposition towards us. Perhaps you have no knowledge of the opinions lately conceived of your king and country in America; the enclosed copy of a letter will make you a little acquainted with them, and convince you how impossible must be every project of bringing us again under the dominion of such a sovereign. With great esteem, I am, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLIII

FROM THE CHEVALIER DELFINO

PARIS, 6 April, 1782.

The Academy of Sciences and Arts in Padua desire to add the name of Franklin to those with which the list of its members is already honored. The Chevalier Delfino, Venetian Ambassador, will be greatly flattered by being allowed to communicate this satisfaction to a rising institution, which enjoys the special protection of the government.

He joins his own solicitation to that of the Academicians, and has the honor to assure Dr. Franklin of his most sincere consideration.[1]

[1] The Society sent to him a diploma, of which the following is a translation:

"PADUA, 20 December, 1781.

"Zeal in promoting the increase of all kinds of useful knowledge naturally unites in a general society all those who consecrate their talents to so noble a purpose; and the particular act of electing them into a learned assembly is properly but an acknowledgment of the original titles of their relationship.

"Among these, Dr. Franklin having distinguished himself eminently, and rendered himself equally memorable in natural philosophy and in politics, the Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts of Padua conceive it to be honoring themselves when they number him among the twenty-four strangers who, by their constitution, are to be associated into their body.

"The Society will be fully recompensed, if its labors in co-operating for the augmentation of science shall be such as that the eminent persons whom it elects may not regard among the smallest of literary honors that which, on the part of the Society, is only a solemn act of adherence to its own judgment, and attention to the voice of fame.

"LEOPOLDO M. M. CALDANI,
"*President.*

"MATTEO STRANNOIA,
"*Sec. for the Sciences.*

"MELCHIOR CESAROTTI,
"*Sec. for Literature.*"

MLIV

TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX [1]

PASSY, 6 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—It gave me great pleasure to hear by the officers returned last winter from your army, that you continued in good health. You will see by the public papers that the English begin to be weary of the war, and they have reason, having suffered many losses, having four nations of enemies on their hands, few men to spare, little money left, and very bad heads. The latter they have lately changed. As yet we know not what measures their new ministry will take. People generally think they will be employed by the king to extricate him from his present difficulties, by obtaining a peace, and that then he will kick them out again, they being all men that he abominates, and who have been forced upon him by the Parliament.

The Commons have already made a sort of half peace with us Americans, by forbidding their troops on the continent to act offensively; and by a new law they have empowered the king to complete it. As yet I hear nothing of the terms they mean to propose; indeed, they have had hardly time to form them. I know they wish to detach us from France; but that is impossible.

I congratulate you on the success of your last glorious campaign. Establishing the liberties of America will not only make that people happy, but will have some effect in diminishing the misery of

[1] At this time with the French army in America.

those who in other parts of the world groan under despotism, by rendering it more circumspect, and inducing it to govern with a lighter hand. A philosopher, endowed with those strong sentiments of humanity that are manifested in your excellent writings,[1] must enjoy great satisfaction in having contributed so extensively by his sword, as well as by his pen, to the *félicité publique*.

M. le Comte de Ségur has desired of me a line of recommendation to you. I consider his request rather as a compliment to me than as asking what may be of use to him, since I find that all who know him here esteem and love him, and he is certainly not unknown to you.

Dare I confess to you that I am your rival with Madame G——? I need not tell you that I am not a dangerous one. I perceive that she loves you very much; and so does, dear sir, yours, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLV

TO MADAM GREENE

Passy, 7 April, 1782.

My Dear Old Friend:—If the Comte de Ségur, son of the Minister of War, should happen to be in your neighborhood, I recommend him warmly to your civilities and friendship, and to those of the good governor. You will find him as amiable and

[1] His principal work was entitled *De la Félicité Publique*.

deserving as any of the French officers whose good conduct you so much applauded last year. I continue as hearty and well as when you first knew me, which, I think, is near thirty years, though perhaps you will not care to own so much. Make my respectful compliments to Mr. Greene, give my love to my friend Ray, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLVI

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

Passy, 8 April, 1782.

Sir:—I did myself the honor of writing to you a few days since by the Count de Ségur. This line is chiefly to present the Prince de Broglie to your Excellency, who goes over to join the army of M. de Rochambeau. He bears an excellent character here, is a hearty friend to our cause, and I am persuaded you will have a pleasure in his conversation. I take leave, therefore, to recommend him to those civilities which you are always happy in showing to strangers of merit and distinction.

I have heretofore congratulated your Excellency on your victories over our enemy's generals; I can now do the same on your having overthrown their politicians. Your late successes have so strengthened the hands of opposition in Parliament that they are become the majority, and have compelled the king

to dismiss all his old ministers and their adherents. The unclean spirits he was possessed with are now cast out of him; but it is imagined that, as soon as he has obtained a peace, they will return with others worse than themselves, *and the last state of that man*, as the Scripture says, *shall be worse than the first.*

As soon as we can learn any thing certain of the projects of the new ministry, I shall take the first opportunity of communicating them. With the greatest esteem and respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLVII

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Passy, 8 April, 1782.

Sir:—Since my last, an extraordinary revolution has taken place in the court of England. All the old ministers are out, and the chiefs of the opposition are in their places. The newspapers that I send will give you the names as correctly as we yet know them. Our last advices mention their kissing hands, but they had yet done nothing in their respective offices, by which one might judge of their projected measures, as whether they will ask a peace, of which they have great need, the nation having of late suffered many losses, men grown extremely scarce, and Lord North's new taxes, proposed as funds for the loan, meeting with great opposition; or whether they will strive to find new resources, and obtain allies,

to enable them to please the king and nation by some vigorous exertions against France, Spain, and Holland.

With regard to America, having, while in opposition, carried the vote for making no longer an offensive war with us, they seem to have tied their own hands from acting against us. Their predecessors had been tampering with this court for a separate peace. The king's answer gave me great pleasure. It will be sent to M. de la Luzerne, and by him communicated to Congress. None of their attempts to divide us meet with the least encouragement, and I imagine the present set will try other measures.

My letters from Holland give pleasing accounts of the rapid progress our affairs are making in that country. The packet from M. Dumas, which I forward with this, will give you the particulars. The Prince de Broglie will do me the favor of delivering this to you. He goes over to join the French army with the more pleasure, as it is employed in the cause of liberty, a cause he loves, and in establishing the interests of America, a country for which he has much regard and affection. I recommend him earnestly to the civilities and services it may be in your power to render him, and I request you would introduce him to the President of Congress, and to the principal members, civil and military.

Our excellent friend, the Marquis de Lafayette, will sail in about three weeks. By that time we may have more interesting intelligence from England, and I shall write you fully. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLVIII

TO ROBERT MORRIS

Passy, 8 April, 1782.

Sir:—The bills accepted by Mr. Jay, and afterwards protested for non-payment, are come and coming back to France and Holland, and I have ordered them to be taken up and discharged by our banker; I hope none will be returned to America.

There is a convoy just going, and another, it is said, will follow in about three weeks; by these two I hope the best part if not all our goods will be got out.

Since my last, of the 30th past, we hear that the old ministry are all out to a man, and that the new ministry have kissed hands, and were about to enter upon their respective functions; as yet we know nothing of their projects. They are all of them men who have in Parliament declared strongly against the American war, as unjust. Their predecessors *made various separate and private essays to dispose us to quit France, and France to forsake us*, but met with no encouragement. Before our friend, the Marquis, sails, we shall probably receive some interesting information, which I will take care to forward to you.

Our public affairs go on swimmingly in Holland, and a treaty will probably soon be entered into between the two republics. I wish I could give you as good news of our private business; Mr. Barclay is still detained by it, and I am deprived of his assistance here.

This will be delivered to you by M. le Prince de

Broglie, who goes over to join the army of M. de Rochambeau. He bears an excellent character, is fond of America and its glorious cause, and will have great satisfaction in fighting for the establishment of liberty. I recommend him earnestly to those civilities which I know you have a pleasure in showing to strangers of merit and distinction.

Your two fine boys continue well. They dine with me every Sunday, being at school in my neighborhood. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLIX

TO HENRY LAURENS

Passy, 12 April, 1782.

Sir:—I should sooner have paid my respects to you by letter, if I had not till lately expected you here, as I understood it to be your intention. Your enlargement gave me great pleasure, and I hope that the terms exacted by the late ministry will now be relaxed, especially when they are informed that you are one of the commissioners appointed to treat of peace. Herewith I send you a copy of the commission; the purport of which you can communicate to the ministers, if you find it proper. If they are disposed to make peace with us and our allies at the same time, I will, on notice from you, send to Mr. Jay, to prepare for meeting at such time and place as shall be agreed on.

As to our treating separately, and quitting our

present alliance, which the late ministry seemed to desire, it is impossible. Our treaties and our instructions, as well as the honor and interest of our country, forbid it. I will communicate those instructions to you as soon as I have the pleasure of seeing you. If you have occasion for money, please to acquaint me with the sum you desire, and I will endeavor to supply you. With very great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLX

FROM M. DE RAYNEVAL

Versailles, 12 April, 1782.

Sir:—I have laid before the Count de Vergennes the different letters which Mr. Hartley had written to you, as well as your proposed reply. The minister has given his entire approbation to the manner in which you have expressed yourself. I subjoin a postscript concerning Mr. Forth[1]; the Count de Vergennes, who has given it a perusal, finds that you may without impropriety transmit it to your correspondent. I have the honor to be, sir, with the most sincere attachment, etc.,

De Rayneval.[2]

P. S.—Since my letter was written, sir, I have

[1] Mr. Forth was a secret agent, sent over to France by the British ministry, to propose a separate treaty with the French court.

[2] M. de Rayneval was secretary to the king's council.

considered anew the different overtures which it embraces. In your opinion the late English minister sincerely desired a reconciliation with us, and proposed with this view a separate peace. At the time you were transmitting this wish of Lord North to me, this ex-minister employed an emissary here to sound the minister of France on the pacific disposition of his court, and offer very advantageous propositions. You will be able to judge from this, sir, of the opinion which I ought to have of the intention of Lord North and his colleagues. To convince you of the truth of the suggestions which I communicate, I will confide to you that the emissary was a Mr. Forth, and that he was charged to reply to the English minister, "*that the King of France is as desirous of peace as the King of England; and that he would accede to it as soon as he could with dignity and safety; but it is a matter of the last importance for His Most Christian Majesty to know, whether the court of London is disposed to treat on equal terms with the allies of France.*" Mr. Forth has set out for London with this answer; but it is probable he will not arrive till after the ministers, who sent him, have retired from office.

You may, sir, without the least hesitation, make use of these details, if you judge it expedient. They will make known to the minister in place the principles of the court of France; and they will convince him, I hope, that the project of disuniting us will be as illusory, as it would prove injurious to us. As to the reply, sent by Mr. Forth, I cannot foresee (if the new ministers are instructed on this point)

in what manner they will think they ought to consider it; if they love peace, as they have persuaded the English nation and all Europe, they need not be embarrassed. France has opened a way in which they can, in my opinion, act without wounding the dignity of their master. If they do not adopt it, they flatter themselves, without doubt, that the chances of war will procure for England the success which has heretofore been denied her; it will be for Providence to crown or frustrate their hopes.

MLXI

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PASSY, 12 April, 1782.

SIR:—Being at court on Tuesday, I learned from the Dutch minister that the new English ministry have offered, through the ministers of Russia, a cessation of arms to Holland, and a renewal of the treaty of 1674. M. de Berkenrode seemed to be of the opinion that the offer was intended to gain time, to obstruct the concert of operations with France for the ensuing campaign, and to prevent the conclusion of a treaty with America. It is apprehended that it may have some effect in strengthening the hands of the English party in that country, and retard affairs a little; but it is hoped that the proposal will not be finally agreed to. It would indeed render the Dutch ridiculous. A, having a cane in his hand, meets his

neighbor B, who happens to have none, takes the advantage, and gives him a sound drubbing. B, having found a stick, and coming to return the blows he received, A says: "My old friend, why should we quarrel? We are neighbors; let us be good ones, and live peaceably by each other, as we used to do." If B is so easily satisfied, and lays aside his stick, the rest of the neighbors, as well as A, will laugh at him. This is the light in which I stated it. Enclosed I send you a copy of the proposition.

I see by the newspapers that the Spaniards, having taken a little post called St. Joseph, pretend to have made a conquest of the Illinois country. In what light does this proceeding appear to Congress? While they decline our offered friendship, are they to be suffered to encroach on our bounds, and shut us up within the Appalachian Mountains? I begin to fear they have some such project.

Having seen in the English prints an article from Lisbon, that two American ships, under French colors, being arrived in that port, were seized by the government, I asked the Portuguese ambassador if it was true. He said he had no advice of it, as he certainly should have had if such a thing had happened; he therefore did not give the least credit to it, and said we might make ourselves perfectly easy; no such treatment would in his opinion be offered us in their ports; and he further observed, on the falsehood of English newspapers, their having lately asserted that the Congress had issued letters of marque for cruising against the Portuguese. With great esteem, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MLXII

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON

Passy, 13 April, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—I received your kind letter of the 23d of December. I rejoice always to hear of your good mother's welfare, though I can write but seldom, and safe opportunities are scarce. Looking over some old papers, I find the rough draft of a letter which I wrote to you fifteen months ago, and which probably miscarried, or your answer miscarried, as I never received any. I enclose it, as the spring is coming on, and the same proposition will now again be in season, and easily executed, if you should approve of it.

You mention Mr. Viny's being with you. What is his present situation? I think he might do well with his wheel business in this country. By your newspapers, Jacob seems to have taken it to himself. Could he not make up a good coach, with the latest useful improvements, and bring you all in it? It would serve here as a specimen of his abilities, if he chose to stay, or would sell well, if he chose to return. I hope your mother has got over her lowness of spirits about the dropsy. It is common for aged people to have at times swelled ankles towards evening; but it is a temporary disorder, which goes off of itself, and has no consequences. My tender love to her.

If you have an opportunity of sending to Geneva, I like well enough your sending the books thither for my godson grandson, who goes on well there. You

do well to keep my granddaughter without stays. God bless her and all of you.

You may imagine I begin to grow happy in my prospects. I should be quite so, if I could see peace and good will restored between our countries; for I enjoy health, competence, friends, and reputation. Peace is the only ingredient wanting to my felicity. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

MLXIII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

PASSY, 13 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—Since mine of the 5th, I have thought further of the subject of our late letters. You were of opinion that the ministry desired *sincerely* a reconciliation with America, and with that view a separate peace with us was proposed. It happened that at the same time Lord North had an emissary here to sound the French ministers with regard to peace, and to make them very advantageous propositions, in case they would abandon America. You may judge from hence, my dear friend, what opinion I must have formed of the intentions of your ministers. To convince you of the truth of this, I may acquaint you that the emissary was a Mr. Forth, and that the answer given him to carry back to the English ministers, was: "*that the King of France is as desirous of peace as the King of England; and that he would accede to it as soon as he could with dignity and safety; but it is a matter of the last importance for His Most*

Christian Majesty to know, whether the court of London is disposed to treat on equal terms with the allies of France."

Mr. Forth went off with this answer for London, but probably did not arrive till after the dismission of the ministers that sent him. You may make any use of this information which you judge proper. The new ministry may see by it the principles that govern this court; and it will convince them, I hope, that the project of dividing us is as vain as it would be to us injurious. I cannot judge what they will think or do in consequence of the answer sent by Mr. Forth, if they have seen it. If they love peace, as they have persuaded the English nation and all Europe to believe, they can be under no difficulty. France has opened a path which, in my opinion, they may use, without hurting the dignity of their master or the honor of the nation. If they do not choose it, they doubtless flatter themselves that a war may still produce successes in favor of England, that have hitherto been withheld. The crowning or frustrating such hopes belongs to Divine Providence; may God send us all more wisdom! I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXIV

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 13 April, 1782.

Sir:—Enclosed with this I send to your Excellency the packet of correspondence between Mr. Hartley

and me, which I promised in my last. You will see that we held nearly the same language, which gives me pleasure.

While Mr. Hartley was making propositions to me, with the approbation or privity of Lord North, to treat separately from France, that minister had an emissary here, a Mr. Forth, formerly a secretary of Lord Stormont's, making proposals to induce this court to treat without us. I understand that several sacrifices were offered to be made, and, among the rest, Canada to be given up to France. The substance of the answer appears in my last letter to Mr. Hartley. But there is a sentence omitted in that letter which I much liked, viz., "*that whenever the two crowns should come to treat, His Most Christian Majesty would show how much the engagements he might enter into were to be relied on, by his exact observance of those he already had with his present allies.*"

If you have received any thing in consequence of your answer by Digges, you will oblige me by communicating it. The ministers here were much pleased with the account given them of your interview by the ambassador. With great respect, I am, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

MLXV

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Paris, 14 April, 1782.

Dear Sir:—The bearer having been detained here, I add this line to suggest that if the new ministry

are disposed to enter into a general treaty of peace, Mr. Laurens, being set entirely at liberty, may receive such propositions as they shall think fit to make relative to time, place, or any other particulars, and come hither with them. He is acquainted that we have full powers to treat and conclude, and that the Congress promise in our commission to ratify and confirm, etc. I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXVI

TO MRS. STEVENSON AND MRS. HEWSON

Paris, 19 April, 1782.

I wrote to you, my dear friends, very lately, and directed my letter to Cheam in Surrey. Mr. Whitefoord tells me that you are removed to Kensington Square, and I fear that my letter may therefore not find you. I sent it under cover to Mr. William Hodgson, merchant, in Coleman Street; which I mention, that, in case it has not come to hand, you may there inquire for it, though it contains little worth the trouble, as it only expresses what you always knew, that I love you both very much and very sincerely.

Mr. Whitefoord will inform you how I live, and that I am very well, as happy as the situation of public affairs will permit, only capable of being made more so, if you were here with me; being ever your truly affectionate friend, B. Franklin.

MLXVII

TO JOHN JAY

PASSY, 22 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I have undertaken to pay all the bills of your acceptance that have come to my knowledge, and I hope in God no more will be drawn upon us, but when funds are first provided. In that case, your constant residence at Madrid is no longer so necessary. You may make a journey, either for health or pleasure, without retarding the progress of a negotiation not yet begun. Here you are greatly wanted, for messengers begin to come and go, and there is much talk of a treaty proposed; but I can neither make, nor agree to propositions of peace, without the assistance of my colleagues. Mr. Adams, I am afraid, cannot just now leave Holland. Mr. Jefferson is not in Europe, and Mr. Laurens is a prisoner, though abroad upon parole. I wish, therefore, that you would resolve upon the journey, and render yourself here as soon as possible. You would be of infinite service. Spain has taken four years to consider whether she should treat with us or not. Give her forty, and let us in the meantime mind our own business. I have much to communicate to you, but choose rather to do it *vivâ voce* than trust it to letters. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MLXVIII

TO JOHN JAY

PASSY, 24 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—The Prince de Masaran being so good as to desire carrying a letter to you, I sit down to write you a few lines, though I hope soon to see you. Enclosed I send a copy of one of Mr. Deane's letters; I shall show you more when you come.

In consequence of a proposition I sent over, the Parliament of Britain have just passed an act for exchanging American prisoners. They have near eleven hundred in the jails of England and Ireland, all committed as charged with high treason. The act is to empower the king, notwithstanding such commitments, to consider them as prisoners of war, according to the law of nations, and exchange them as such. This seems to be giving up their pretensions of considering us as rebellious subjects, and is a kind of acknowledgment of our independence. Transports are now taking up, to carry back to their country the poor, brave fellows, who have borne for years their cruel captivity, rather than serve our enemies, and an equal number of English are to be delivered up in return. I have, upon desire, furnished passports for the vessels.

Our affairs in Holland are *en bon train;* we have some prospect of another loan there; and all goes well here.

The proposal to us of a separate peace with England has been rejected in the manner you wish, and I am pretty certain they will now enter into a

general treaty. I wrote you a few lines by last post, and on the same day a few more by the court courier. They were chiefly to press your coming hither to assist in the affair. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MLXIX

FROM DAVID HARTLEY

London, 1 May, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—I have received a packet from you containing several letters of various dates. As I shall probably have a safe opportunity of conveyance to you when Mr. Laurens leaves this country, I am now sitting down to write to you an *omnium* kind of letter of various matters as they occur. The late ministry being departed, I may now speak of things more freely. I will take a sentence in one of your letters for my text. *Vide* yours of April 13, 1782, in which you say, *you were of opinion that the late ministry desired* SINCERELY *a reconciliation with America, and with that view a separate peace* with us was proposed. I must qualify this sentence much before I can adopt it as my opinion. As to *reconciliation*, I never gave much credit to them for that wish. *It is a sweet expression. It certainly means* MORE *than peace.* The utmost that I ever gave the late ministry credit for, was a wish for peace. And I still believe that the wisest among them grew from day to day more disposed to peace, or an abatement

of the war, in proportion as they became more alarmed for their own situations and their responsibility. Had the war been more successful, I should not have expected much relenting towards peace or reconciliation. That this has always been the measure of my opinion of them, I refer you to some words in a letter from me to you, dated January 5, 1780, for proof: "But for the point of sincerity; why, as to that, I have not much to say; I have at least expected some hold upon their *prudence*."

My argument runs thus, it is a *bargain* for *you* (ministers) to be sincere *now*. Common prudence may hint to you to look to yourselves. It has amazed me beyond measure, that this principle of common selfish *prudence* has not had the effect which I expected. I have not been disposed to be deceived by any conciliatory professions, which I considered only as arising from prudence; and I hope that I have not led you into any deception, having so fully explained myself to you on that head. Had the American war been more prosperous on the part of the late ministry, I do not believe the late resignation would have taken place. But it is evident, from the proposition to the court of France, which you have communicated to me (and which I have communicated to the present ministry with your letter), that even to the last hour some part of the late ministry were still set upon the American war to the last extremity; and probably another more *prudent* part of the ministry would proceed no further; which, if it be so, may reasonably be imputed as the cause of the dissolution of the late ministry.

These have been the arguments, which I have always driven and insisted upon with the greatest expectation of success, viz., *prudential* arguments from the total impracticability of the war, responsibility, etc. I have been astonished beyond measure that these arguments have not sooner had their effect. If I could give you an idea of the many conferences which I have had upon the subject, I should tell you that many times *Felix has trembled.* When reduced by the terror of responsibility either to renounce the American war, or to relinquish their places, they have chosen the latter; which is a most wretched and contemptible retribution, either to their country or to mankind, for the desolation in which they have involved every nation that they have ever been connected with. Peace they would not leave behind them. Their legacy to their country and to mankind has been, *Let darkness be the burier of the dead!*

As to the proposal of a separate peace arising from a desire of *reconciliation*, it certainly was so on the part of the people of England; but, on the part of the late ministry, it probably arose from the hopes of suggesting to France ideas of some infidelity on the part of America towards them. If you should ask me why I have *seemed* to conspire with this, my answer is very plain. In the first place, if I could have prevailed with the late ministry to have actually made an irrevocable offer, *on their own part*, of a separate peace to America, that very offer would in the same instant have become on their part also a consent to a general peace; because *they* never had

any wish to a separate contest with France, and, America being out of the question, *they* would have thought of nothing after that but general peace. I never could bring them even to this. *They* wished that *America* should make the offer of a separate treaty, for obvious views. *My* proposal was, that *they* should offer irrevocable terms of peace to America. If they had meant what they pretended, and what the people of England did really desire, they would have adopted that proposition. Then the question would have come forward upon the fair and honorable construction of a treaty between France and America, *the essential and direct end* of which was fully accomplished. When I speak of Great Britain offering irrevocable terms of peace to America, I mean such terms as would have effectually satisfied the provision of the treaty, viz., tacit independence.

I send you a paper entitled a *Breviate*,[1] which I laid before the late ministry; and their not having acted upon it, was a proof to me that the disposition of their heart to America was not altered, but that all their relenting arose from the impracticability of that war, and their want of success in it. But, desponding as they were at last, it was not inconsistent with my expectations of their conduct that they should make great offers to France to abandon America. It was the only weapon left in their hands. In course of negotiating with the late ministry, I perceived their courage drooping from time to time, for the last three or four years; and it was upon that

[1] See this "Breviate" in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 351.

ground I gave them credit for an increasing disposition towards peace. Some dropped off, others sunk under the load of folly, and at last they all failed. My argument *ad homines* to the late ministry might be stated thus: "*If you don't kill them, they will kill you.* But the war is impracticable *on your part;* ergo, the best thing you can do *for your own sake* is to make *peace.*" This was reasoning to men, and through men to things. But there is no measure of rage in pride and disappointment;

"Spicula cæca relinquunt
Infixa venis, animasque in vulnere ponunt."

So much for the argument of the *breviate*, as far as it respected the late ministry. It was a test which proved that they were not sincere in their professions. If they had been in earnest to have given the war a turn towards the House of Bourbon, and to have dropped the American war, a plain road lay before them. The sentiments of the people of England were conformable to the argument of that breviate; or rather I should say, what is the real truth, that the arguments of the breviate were dictated by the notoriety of that sentiment in the people of England. My object and wish always have been to strike at the root of the evil, the American war.

If the British nation have jealousies and resentments against the House of Bourbon, yet still the first step in every case would be to rescind the American war, and not to keep it lurking in the rear, to become hereafter, in case of certain events, a reversionary war with America for unconditional

terms. This reversionary war was never the object of the people of England; therefore the argument of the breviate was calculated *bona fide* to accomplish their views, and to discriminate the fallacious pretences of the late administration from the real wishes of the country, as expressed in the circular resolution of many counties in the year 1780, first moved at York, on March 28, 1780. Every other principle and every other mode of conduct only imply, as you very justly express it, a secret hope that war may still produce successes, and then——. The designs which have been lurking under this pretext could not mean any thing else than this: Who knows but that we may still talk to America at last? The only test of clear intentions would have been this: to have cut up the American war, and all possible return to it for any cause, or under any pretext. I am confident that the sentiment of the people of England is, and always has been, to procure peace and reconciliation with America, and to vindicate the national honor in the contest with the House of Bourbon. If this intention had been pursued in a simple and direct manner, I am confident that the honor and safety of the British nation would long ago have been established in a general peace with all the belligerent powers. These are the sentiments upon which I have always acted in those negotiations which I have had upon the subject of peace with the late ministry; reconciliation with America, and peace with all the world, upon terms consistent with the honor and safety of my own country.

Peace must be sought in such ways as promise the greatest degree of practicability. The sentiments of individuals as philanthropists may be overborne by the power of ancient prejudices, which too frequently prevail in the aggregates of nations. In such case, the philanthropist, who wishes the good of his own country and of mankind, must be the bulrush bending to the storm, and not the sturdy oak, unavailingly resisting. National prejudices are, I hope, generally upon the decline. Reason and humanity gain ground every day against their *natural* enemies, folly and injustice. The ideas of nations being *natural* enemies to each other are generally reprobated. But still, *jealousies* and ancient rivalships remain, which obstruct the road to peace among men. If one belligerent nation will entertain a standing force of three or four hundred thousand fighting men, other nations must have defended frontiers and barrier towns, and the barrier of a neighboring island, whose constitution does not allow a standing military force, must consist in a superiority at sea. It is necessary for her own defence. If all nations by mutual consent will reduce their *offensive* powers, which they only claim under the pretext of necessary *defence*, and bring forward the reign of the millennium, then away with your frontiers, and your Gibraltars, and the key of the Baltic, and all the hostile array of nations,

"Aspera compositis mitescant sæcula bellis."

These must be the sentiments of every philanthropist in his interior thoughts. But, if we are not to seek

peace by some practicable method, accommodated to the remaining prejudices of the multitude, we shall not in our own time, I fear, see that happy day. If Great Britain and France are ancient rivals, then, until the reign of the millennium shall approach, arrange that rivalship upon equitable terms; as the two leading nations of Europe, set them in balance to each other, the one by land, the other by sea. Give to France her elevated rank among the nations of Europe; give to Great Britain the honor of her flag, and the security of her island by her wooden walls; and there would be no obstruction to general and perpetual peace. The prejudices of disrespect between nations prevail only among the inferior ranks. Believe me, for one at least, I have the highest sentiments of respect for the nation of France. I have no other sentiments of hostility but what are honorable towards them, and which, as a member of a rival state at war with them, consists in the duty of vigilance, which I owe towards the honor and interests of my own country. I am not conscious of a word or thought which, *on the point of honor*, I would wish to have concealed from a French minister.

In the mode, which I have proposed, of unravelling the present subjects of jealousy and contest, I would make my proposals openly to France herself. Let America be free, and enjoy happiness and peace for ever. If France and Great Britain have jealousies or rivalships between themselves, as European nations, I then say to France: "Let us settle these points between ourselves, if, unfortunately, we shall

not be able by honorable negotiation to compromise the indispensable points of national honor and safety." This would be my language to France, open and undisguised. In the meanwhile, I desire you to observe that it would not be with reluctance that I should offer eternal freedom, happiness, and peace to America. You know my thoughts too well to suspect that. I speak only as in a state of war, desirous to arrange the complicated interests, and to secure the respective honor, of nations. My wishes are, and always have been, for the peace, liberty, and safety of mankind. In the pursuit of those blessed objects, not only this country and America, but France herself and the House of Bourbon, may justly claim the conspiring exertions of every free and liberal mind, even among their temporary enemies and rivals. I am, etc.,

D. Hartley.

MLXX

TO M. DUMAS

Passy, 3 May, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I received yours of the 15th past, and perused the contents with great pleasure. I had before received your pacquet by Mrs. Boers, and forwarded it immediately. Enclosed I send you a few copies of a paper that places in a striking light, the English barbarities in America, particularly those committed by the savages at their instigation. The Form may perhaps not be genuine, but the *substance* is truth; the number of our people of all

kinds and ages, murdered and scalped by them being known to exceed that of the invoice. Make any use of them you may think proper to shame your Anglomanes, but do not let it be known through what hands they come. I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

B. Franklin.

My respects and congratulations to Mr. A. ——

MLXXI

TO A FRIEND

Passy, 8 May, 1782.

Sir:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing me, and am much obliged by your kind present of a book. The relish for reading poetry had long since left me; but there is something so new in the manner, so easy and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once. I beg you to accept my thankful acknowledgments, and to present my respects to the author.

I shall take care to forward the letters to America, and shall be glad of any other opportunity of doing what may be agreeable to you, being, with great respect for your character, your most obedient humble servant, B. Franklin.[1]

[1] Cowper seems to have been much gratified with the compliment contained in this letter, which was communicated to him by the person to whom it had been written. Cowper forwarded a copy of it to Mr.

MLXXII

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PHILADELPHIA, 22 May, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I expected to have written you a long letter, more particularly as it is some time since you have received any information from this country, the enemy having effectually blocked up our ports for some months past. But I find myself so extremely hurried that I have hardly leisure to write this, the vessel by which it is sent going sooner than I apprehended.

You will receive herewith a letter to his most Christian Majesty, which you will present, and a copy, which you will be pleased to deliver to the Count de Vergennes. This, I believe, is the usual form. You will also receive in the enclosed papers an account of the marks of respect with which the annunciation of the birth of the Dauphin was received. These are of some importance at a time when Great Britain is endeavoring to represent us as weary of the alliance, and anxiously wishing to

Unwin, and said: "A merchant, a friend of ours, sent my poems to one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters, as well as one of the most important in the political world that the present age can boast of. Now perhaps your conjecturing facilities are puzzled, and you begin to ask: 'Who, where, and what is he? Speak out, for I am all impatience.' I will not say a word more; the letter in which he returned his thanks shall speak for me."

He then inserts the letter, and adds: "We may now treat the critics as the Archbishop of Toledo treated Gil Blas when he found fault with one of his sermons. His Grace gave him a kick, and said: 'Begone for a jackanapes, and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it.'"—Southey's edition of *Cowper's Works*, Vol. IV., p. 217.

return to our connection with them. It is probable that the late changes in the British administration, and the conciliatory measures they propose, may excite apprehensions of our firmness. I have the pleasure of assuring you that it has not produced the least effect; all orders of people seem to agree that it should redouble your vigilance, and while it argues the weakness of the enemy, it serves as a spring to our exertions.

Sir Guy Carleton, shortly after his arrival, wrote a complimentary letter to General Washington, sending him an account of his appointment and the prints which contained the parliamentary debates, and requesting leave to send his secretary with despatches to Congress. The General refused the passport till he had the sense of Congress thereon, and, upon Sir Guy's letter being laid before them, they came to the resolution enclosed.

The papers I send you contain also resolutions of the State of Maryland and of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, which, I believe, speak the language of all the States, which will, I doubt not, make similar declarations when their legislatures shall be convened. So that you may safely assure his Majesty's ministers that no art which Great Britain can put in practice will have the least influence in lessening the attachment of the people of this country to the principles of the alliance. It is true their expectations of powerful assistance this campaign are very high. They saw with some pain last year that the fleet was withdrawn when the enemy were absolutely at their feet, and when one month's stay would have

reduced either New York or Charleston. They look eagerly for the return of the fleet. They generally believe this to be the last campaign in America. There is no knowing what effect a disappointment in this hope would have. I believe, from the present view of things, that they would bear it with fortitude; but I should be sorry to see it put to the trial.

Our trade has suffered astonishingly of late; the influence which this will have upon our internal resources is much to be apprehended. It is to be wished that France would see the great advantages she would derive from keeping a superiority on this coast, where her fleets would be maintained cheaply, while they protected our commerce, and compelled England either to risk her army or to keep a regular fleet here at five times their expense. Enclosed is a statement of our trade, drawn up by Mr. Morris. You are requested to communicate this to the court of Versailles, and to use every means in your power to bring the court to concur in adopting it.

I also enclose a resolution of Congress to request you to apply for the prisoners due to us, in order that they may be sent here and exchanged for our seamen, who are confined without the hope of relief. Is it impossible to devise some means for the enlargement of those who are confined in England? Can no cartel be settled, or no means devised for sending them here to be exchanged? Their case is really pitiable. I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MLXXIII

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON

PASSY, June, 1782.

I send you a few of your translations. I did not put your name as the translator (which I at first intended), because I apprehend it might *look like* vanity in you; and, as I shall otherwise make it known, I think the omitting it will *look like* modesty.

Present my sincere love to your mother. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you both once more, well and happy. But you, who are truly sagacious and honest, and can give good advice, tell me frankly your sentiments, whether, in case of peace, it will be prudent in me to visit England before I return to America. I have no other call there, but the pleasure of seeing my friends, of whom I must again soon take leave; and my appearing may perhaps exasperate my enemies. If you think this not of serious consequence, tell me whether I may come right through London to Kensington, with the view of finding room in your house; or whether I shall take a lodging in the city to return to. Do not let me in the least incommode you.

I forget whether I ever acknowledged the receipt of the prints of Mr. Hewson. I have one of them framed in my study. I think it very like. I believe I acquainted you with good Mr. Dubourg's death. He had enlarged his little piece, which you translated; and, in respect for his memory, I have had it printed. I enclose a copy.

I am sorry to learn the still unsettled state of Mr.

——'s family. Mrs. —— is undoubtedly well qualified to teach English here, but I cannot think it would be worth her while to come hither for that purpose. It is true that our language is in vogue here, and many learn a little of it, but the instructors are poorly paid, and the employ precarious and uncertain; this observation is so general, as to have given rise to a proverb, *Pauvre comme un maître de langues*. Your affectionate friend,

B. Franklin.

MLXXIV

TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

Passy, 7 June, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of the 7th of April, also one of the 3d of May. I have always great pleasure in hearing from you, in learning that you are well, and that you continue your experiments. I should rejoice much if I could once more recover the leisure to search with you into the works of nature; I mean the *inanimate*, not the *animate* or moral part of them; the more I discovered of the former, the more I admired them; the more I know of the latter, the more I am disgusted with them. Men I find to be a sort of beings very badly constructed, as they are generally more easily provoked than reconciled, more disposed to do mischief to each other than to make reparation, much more easily deceived than undeceived, and having more pride

and even pleasure in killing than in begetting one another; for without a blush they assemble in great armies at noonday to destroy, and when they have killed as many as they can, they exaggerate the number to augment the fancied glory; but they creep into corners, or cover themselves with the darkness of night, when they mean to beget, as being ashamed of a virtuous action. A virtuous action it would be, and a vicious one the killing of them, if the species were really worth producing or preserving; but of this I begin to doubt.

I know you have no such doubts, because, in your zeal for their welfare, you are taking a great deal of pains to save their souls. Perhaps, as you grow older, you may look upon this as a hopeless project, or an idle amusement, repent of having murdered in mephitic air so many honest, harmless mice, and wish that, to prevent mischief, you had used boys and girls instead of them. In what light we are viewed by superior beings, may be gathered from a piece of late West India news, which possibly has not yet reached you. A young angel of distinction being sent down to this world on some business, for the first time, had an old courier-spirit assigned him as a guide. They arrived over the seas of Martinico, in the middle of the long day of obstinate fight between the fleets of Rodney and De Grasse. When, through the clouds of smoke, he saw the fire of the guns, the decks covered with mangled limbs and bodies dead or dying; the ships sinking, burning, or blown into the air; and the quantity of pain, misery, and destruction the crews yet alive were thus with

so much eagerness dealing round to one another, he turned angrily to his guide and said: "You blundering blockhead, you are ignorant of your business; you undertook to conduct me to the earth, and you have brought me into hell!" "No, sir," says the guide, "I have made no mistake; this is really the earth, and these are men. Devils never treat one another in this cruel manner; they have more sense, and more of what men (vainly) call humanity."

But to be serious, my dear old friend, I love you as much as ever, and I love all the honest souls that meet at the London Coffee-House. I only wonder how it happened that they and my other friends in England came to be such good creatures in the midst of so perverse a generation. I long to see them and you once more, and I labor for peace with more earnestness, that I may again be happy in your sweet society.

I showed your letter to the Duke de Larochefoucauld, who thinks with me, that the new experiments you have made are extremely curious, and he has given me thereupon a note, which I enclose, and I request you would furnish me with the answer desired.

Yesterday the Count du Nord[1] was at the Academy of Sciences, when sundry experiments were exhibited for his entertainment; among them one by M. Lavoisier, to show that the strongest fire we yet know is made in a charcoal blown upon with dephlogisticated air. In a heat so produced he melted platina presently, the fire being much more powerful

[1] The Grand Duke of Russia, afterwards Emperor Paul First.

than that of the strongest burning mirror. Adieu, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXXV

TO DR. SHIPLEY, BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH

Passy, 10 June, 1782.

I received and read the letter from my dear and much respected friend with infinite pleasure. After so long a silence, and the long continuance of its unfortunate causes, a line from you was a prognostic of happier times approaching, when we may converse and communicate freely, without danger from the malevolence of men enraged by the ill success of their distracted projects.

I long with you for the return of peace, on the general principles of humanity. The hope of being able to pass a few more of my last days happily in the sweet conversation and company I once enjoyed at Twyford,[1] is a particular motive that adds strength to the general wish, and quickens my industry to procure that best of blessings. After much occasion to consider the folly and mischiefs of a state of warfare, and the little or no advantage obtained even by those nations who have conducted it with the most success, I have been apt to think that there has never been, nor ever will be, any such thing as a *good* war, or a *bad* peace.

[1] The country residence of the Bishop.

You ask if I still relish my old studies. I relish them, but I cannot pursue them. My time is engrossed unhappily with other concerns. I requested of the Congress last year my discharge from this public station, that I might enjoy a little leisure in the evening of a long life of business; but it was refused me, and I have been obliged to drudge on a little longer.

You are happy, as your years come on, in having that dear and most amiable family about you. Four daughters! how rich! I have but one, and she necessarily detained from me at a thousand leagues' distance. I feel the want of that tender care of me which might be expected from a daughter, and would give the world for one. Your shades are all placed in a row over my fireplace, so that I not only have you always in my mind, but constantly before my eyes.

The cause of liberty and America has been greatly obliged to you. I hope you will live long to see that country flourish under its new constitution, which I am sure will give you great pleasure. Will you permit me to express another hope, that, now your friends are in power, they will take the first opportunity of showing the sense they ought to have of your virtues and your merit?

Please to make my best respects acceptable to Mrs. Shipley, and embrace for me tenderly all our dear children. With the utmost esteem, respect, and veneration, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXXVI

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON

PASSY, 13 June, 1782.

MY DEAR CHILD:—I received your pleasing letter of the 1st of May, through the hands of Mr. Hodgson, and one since by Mr. Oswald. You cannot be more pleased in talking about your children, your methods of instructing them, and the progress they make, than I am in hearing it, and in finding that, instead of following the idle amusements, which both your fortune and the custom of the age might have led you into, your delight and your duty go together, by employing your time in the education of your offspring. This is following nature and reason, instead of fashion; than which nothing is more becoming the character of a woman of sense and virtue.

We have here a female writer on education, who has lately published three volumes that are much talked of. I will send them to you by the first opportunity. They are much praised and much censured. The author, Madame la Comtesse de Genlis, is made, in consequence of her writing that work, governess of the children of the Duc de Chartres, who is son of the Duke of Orleans. Perhaps you may not find much in it, that can be of use to you, but you may find something.

I enclose another piece on the same subject, written by another Comtesse, Madame de Forbach, who does me the honor of calling me her friend, by which means I have a copy, it not being published. When you have leisure, I shall like to see your remarks.

Do not send my books to Geneva. The troubles of that city have driven the school and my boy out of it, and I have thought of sending for him home. Perhaps I may put him for a while under your care, to recover his English in the same school with your sons.

I hope with you that there may be a peace, and that we may once more meet. Remember me kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Viny. I do not at present want a carriage. Embrace your good mother for me with much affection, and believe me to be, my dear friend, yours ever,

B. Franklin.

MLXXVII

TO RICHARD PRICE

Passy, 13 June, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I received a few days since your kind letter of the 27th past by Messrs. Milford & Brown. It gave me great pleasure to hear of your welfare. All that come with a line from you are welcome.

I congratulate you on the late revolution in your public affairs. Much good may arise from it, though possibly not all that good men and even the new ministers themselves may have wished or expected. The change, however, in the sentiments of the nation, in which I see evident effects of your writings, with those of our deceased friend, Mr. Burgh,[1] and others

1 "The death of this amiable and excellent person had happened a few weeks before the writing of this letter. He had long been the

of our valuable Club, should encourage you to proceed.

The ancient Roman and Greek orators could only speak to the number of citizens capable of being assembled within the reach of their voice. Their writings had little effect, because the bulk of the people could not read. Now by the press we can speak to nations, and good books and well written pamphlets have great and general influence. The facility with which the same truths may be repeatedly enforced by placing them daily in different lights in newspapers, which are everywhere read, gives a great chance of establishing them. And we now find that it is not only right to strike while the iron is hot, but that it may be very practicable to heat it by continually striking.

I suppose all may now correspond with more freedom, and I shall be glad to hear from you as often as may be convenient to you. Please to present my best respects to our good old friends of the London Coffee-House. I often figure to myself the pleasure I should have in being once more seated among them. With the greatest and most sincere esteem and affection, I am, my dear friend, yours ever,

B. Franklin.

intimate friend of Dr. Price, and one of the principal members of his congregation at Newington Green. He was the author of several valuable works on moral and political subjects, and in all of them proved himself the steadfast friend of virtue and liberty. His last publication, under the title of *Political Disquisitions*, abounds with the most important information on the extreme defectiveness of the national representation, and cannot fail to be admired by all who wish to restore the constitution to its original purity."—Morgan's *Life of Price*, p. 96.

MLXXVIII

FROM JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, 13 June, 1782.

SIR:—I had yesterday, at Amsterdam, the honor of receiving your Excellency's letter of June the 2d.

The discovery that Mr. Grenville's power was only to treat with France, does not surprise me at all. The British ministry are too divided among themselves, and have too formidable an opposition against them in the king and the old ministers, and are possessed of too little of the confidence of the nation, to have courage to make concessions of any sort, especially since the news of their successes in the East and West Indies. What their vanity will end in, God only knows; for my own part I cannot see a probability that they will ever make peace until their finances are ruined and such distresses brought upon them as will work up their parties into a civil war.

I wish their enemies could by any means be persuaded to carry on the war against them in places where they might be sure of triumphs, instead of insisting on pursuing it where they are sure of defeat. But we must take patience, and wait for time to do what wisdom might easily and soon do.

I have not as yet taken any engagements with the Dutch not to make peace without them; but I will take such engagements in a moment if the Dutch will take them, and I believe they would very cheerfully. I shall not propose it, however, till I have the concurrence of the Duc de la Vauguyon, who will

do nothing without the instructions of his court. I would not delay it for a moment from any expectation that the English will acknowledge our independence and make peace with us, because I have no such expectations. The permanent friendship of the Dutch may be easily obtained by the United States; that of England, never; it is gone with the days before the flood. If we ever enjoy the smallest degree of sincere friendship again from England, I am totally incapable of seeing the character of a nation or the connection of things; which, however, may be the case for what I know. They have brought themselves into such a situation! Spain, Holland, America, the armed neutrality, have all such pretensions and demands upon them, that where is the English minister, or member of Parliament, that dares vote for the concession to them? The pretensions of France I believe would be so moderate that possibly they might be acceded to. But it is much to be feared that Spain, who deserves the least, will demand the most; in short, the work of peace appears so impracticable and chimerical, that I am happy in being restrained to this country by my duty, and by this means excused from troubling my head much about it.

I have a letter from America that informed me that Mr. Jay had refused to act in the commission for peace; but if he is on the way to Paris, as you suppose, I presume my information must be a mistake, which I am very glad of. Mr. Laurens did me the honor of a very short visit in his way to France; but I was very sorry to learn from him that, in a

letter to your Excellency from Ostend, he had declined serving in the commission for peace. I had vast pleasure in his conversation; for I found him possessed of the most exact judgment concerning our enemies, and of the same noble sentiments in all things which I saw in him in Congress.

What is the system of Russia? Does she suppose that England has too many enemies upon her, and that their demands and pretensions are too high? Does she seek to embroil affairs, and to light up a general war in Europe? Is Denmark in concert with her, or any other power? Her conduct is a phenomenon. Is there any secret negotiation or intrigue on foot to form a party for England among the powers of Europe, and to make a balance against the power of the enemies of England?

The States of Holland and several other provinces have taken a resolution against the mediation for a separate peace; and this nation seems to be well fixed in its system and in the common cause.

My best respects and affections to my old friend, Mr. Jay, if you please, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

JOHN ADAMS.

MLXXIX

TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ

PASSY, 21 June, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I am sorry that any misunderstanding should arise between you and Dr. ——. The indiscretions of friends on both sides often occasion

such misunderstandings. When they produce public altercations, the ignorant are diverted at the expense of the learned. I hope, therefore, that you will omit the polemic piece in your French edition, and take no public notice of the improper behavior of your friend, but go on with your excellent experiments, produce facts, improve science, and do good to mankind. Reputation will follow, and the little injustices of contemporary laborers will be forgotten; my example may encourage you, or else I should not mention it. You know that when my papers were first published, the Abbé Nollet, then high in reputation, attacked them in a book of letters. An answer was expected from me, but I made none to that book, nor to any other. They are now all neglected, and the truth seems to be established. You can always employ your time better than in polemics.

M. Lavoisier the other day showed an experiment at the Academy of Sciences, to the Count du Nord, that is said to be curious. He kindled a hollow charcoal, and blew into it a stream of dephlogisticated air. In this focus, which is said to be the hottest fire human art has yet been able to produce, he melted platina in a few minutes.

Our American affairs wear a better aspect now than at any time heretofore. Our counsels are perfectly united; our people all armed and disciplined. Much and frequent service as militia has indeed made them soldiers. Our enemies are much diminished, and reduced to two or three garrisons. Our commerce and agriculture flourish. England at length sees the difficulty of conquering us, and no

longer demands submission, but asks for peace. She would now think herself happy to obtain a federal union with us, and will endeavor it; but, perhaps, will be disappointed, as it is the interest of all Europe to prevent it. I last year requested of Congress to release me from this service, that I might spend the evening of life more agreeably in philosophic leisure; but I was refused. If I had succeeded, it was my intention to make the tour of Italy with my grandson, pass into Germany, and spend some time happily with you, whom I have always loved, ever since I knew you, with uninterrupted affection.

We have lost our common friend, the excellent Pringle. How many pleasing hours you and I have passed together in his company! I must soon follow him, being now in my seventy-seventh year; but you have yet a prospect of many years of usefulness still before you, which I hope you will fully enjoy; and I am persuaded you will ever kindly remember your truly affectionate friend,

B. Franklin.

MLXXX

TO MISS ALEXANDER

Passy, June, 1782.

I am not at all displeased that the thesis and dedication with which we were threatened are blown over, for I dislike much all sorts of mummery. The republic of letters has gained no reputation, whatever

else it may have gained, by the commerce of dedication. I never made one and I never desired that one should be made to me. When I submitted to receive this, it was from the bad habit I have long had of doing every thing that ladies desire me to do; there is no refusing any thing to Madame La Mark, nor to you. I have been to pay my respects to that amiable lady, not merely because it was a compliment due to her, but because I love her; which induces me to excuse her for not letting me in; the same reason I should have for excusing your faults, if you had any.

I have not seen your papa since the receipt of your pleasing letter, so could arrange nothing with him respecting the carriage. During seven or eight days I shall be very busy; after that you shall hear from me, and the carriage shall be at your service. How could you think of writing to me about chimneys and fires in such weather as this! Now is the time for the frugal lady you mention to save her wood, obtain *plus de chaleur* and lay it up against winter, as people do ice against summer. Frugality is an enriching virtue; a virtue I never could acquire myself; but I was once lucky enough to find it in a wife, who thereby became a fortune to me. Do you possess it? If you do, and I were twenty years younger, I would give your father one thousand guineas for you. I know you would be worth more to me as a *ménagère*, but I am covetous, and love good bargains. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours, most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXXXI

TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ

1. When the subtile fluid, which we call fire or heat, enters a solid body, it separates the particles of which that body consists farther from each other, and thus dilates the body, increasing its dimensions.

2. A greater proportion of fire introduced separates the parts so far from each other that the solid body becomes a fluid, being melted.

3. A still greater quantity of heat separates parts so far that they lose their mutual attraction, and acquire a mutual repulsion, whence they fly from each other, either gradually or suddenly, with great force, as the separating power is introduced gradually or suddenly.

4. Thus ice becomes water, and water vapor, which vapor is said to expand fourteen thousand times the space it occupied in the form of water, and with an explosive force in certain cases capable of producing great and violent effects.

5. Thus metals expand, melt, and explode; the two first effected by the gradual application of the separating power, and all three, in its sudden application, by artificial electricity or lightning.

6. That fluid, in passing through a metal rod or wire, is generally supposed to occupy the whole dimension of the rod. If the rod is smaller

in some places than in others, the quantity of fluid, which is not sufficient to make any change in the larger or thicker part, may be sufficient to expand, melt, or explode the smaller, the quantity of fluid passing being the same, and the quantity of matter less that is acted upon.

7. Thus the links of a brass chain, with a certain quantity of electricity passing through them, have been melted in the small parts that form their contact, while the rest have not been affected.

8. Thus a piece of tinfoil cut in this form, enclosed in a pack of cards, and having the charge of a large bottle sent through it, has been found unchanged in the broadest part, between *a* and *b*, melted only in spots between *c* and *d*, and the part between *d* and *e* reduced to smoke by explosion.

9. The tinfoil melted in spots between *b* and *c* and that whole space not being melted, seems to indicate that the foil in the melted parts had been thinner than the rest, on which thin parts the passing fluid had therefore a greater effect.

10. Some metals melt more easily than others; tin more easily than copper, copper than iron. It is supposed (perhaps not yet proved) that those which melt with the least of the separating power, whether that be common fire or the electric fluid, do also explode with less of that power.

11. The explosions of metal, like those of gunpowder, act in all directions. Thus the explosion of gold-leaf between plates of glass, breaking the glass to pieces, will throw those pieces into all parts of the room; and the explosion of iron, or even of water,

between the joints of stone in a steeple, will scatter the stones in all directions round the neighborhood. But the direction given to those stones by the explosion is to be considered as different from the direction of the lightning which happened to occasion those explosions of the matter it met with in its passage between the clouds and the earth.

12. When bodies positively electrized approach sharp-pointed rods or thin plates of metal, these are more easily rendered negative by the repulsive force of the electric fluid in those positively electrized bodies, which chases away the natural quantity contained in those *mince* rods or plates, though it would not have force enough to chase the same out of larger masses. Hence such points, rods, and plates, being in a negative state, draw to themselves more strongly and in greater quantities the electric fluid offered them, than such masses can do which remain nearly in their natural state. And thus a pointed rod receives not only at its point, though more visibly there, but at all parts of its length that are exposed. Hence a needle held between the finger and thumb, and presented to a charged prime conductor, will draw off the charge more expeditiously if held near the eye, and the rest of its length is exposed to the electrical atmosphere, than if all but half an inch of the point is concealed and covered.

13. Lightning so differs from solid projectiles, and from common fluids projected with violence that, though its course is rapid, it is most easily turned to follow the direction of good conductors. And it is doubted whether any experiments in electricity have

yet decisively proved that the electric fluid in its violent passage through the air where a battery is discharged has what we call a momentum, which would make it continue its course in a right line, though a conductor offered near that course to give it a different or even contrary direction; or that it has a force capable of pushing forward or overthrowing the objects it strikes against, even though it sometimes pierces them. Does not this seem to indicate that the perforation is not made by the force of a projectile passing through, but rather by the explosion or the dilatation, in passing, of a subtile line of fluid?

14. Such an explosion or dilatation of a line of fluid, passing through a card, would raise burrs around the hole, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, and sometimes on both, according to the disposition of the part of the paper near the surface, without any regard to the direction of the fluid.

15. Great thanks are due to the ingenious philosopher who examined the vane at Cremona, and who took the pains to describe so exactly the effects of the lightning upon it, and to communicate that description. The fact is extremely curious. It is well worth considering. He invites to that consideration. He has fairly given his own opinion. He will with candor receive that of others, though it may happen to differ from his own. By calmly discussing rather than by warmly disputing, the truth is most easily obtained. I shall give my opinion freely, as it is asked, hoping it may prove the true one;

and promising myself, if otherwise, the honor at least of acknowledging frankly my error, and of being thankful to him who kindly shows it to me.

16. By the account given of this stroke of lightning upon the steeple of Cremona, it appears that the rod of iron or spindle, on which the vane turned, was of about two inches circumference, terminating in a cross above the vane, and its lower end fixed in a marble pedestal.

17. That the plate of the vane was copper, eight or nine inches wide, and near twice as long. That it was about one line thick near the spindle, and growing thinner insensibly towards the other end, where its thickness did not exceed three quarters of a line, the weight twenty ounces and a half.

18. That the copper had been tinned over.

19. That the marble pedestal was split by the stroke into many pieces, and scattered over the roof, garden, and court of neighboring buildings. One piece was found thrown to a distance of forty feet. The spindle was broken and displaced, and the vane thrown on the roof of the parsonage house, twenty feet from the steeple.

20. That the vane was perforated in eighteen places, the holes of irregular forms, and the metal which had filled them pushed outwards, in some of them on one side of the vane, in others on the other. The copper showed marks of having been partly melted, and in some places tin and copper melted and mixed together. There were marks of smoke in several places.

21. The ragged parts bent outwards round each

hole, being brought back to their original flat position, were not, though evidently a little thinned and dilated, sufficient to fill the place.

22. From the effects described (19), it is clear that the quantity of lightning which fell on this steeple at Cremona was very great.

23. The vane being a thin plate of copper, its edges and corners may be considered as a series of points, and, being therefore sooner rendered negative by the repulsive force of an approaching positive cloud than the blunt and thick iron cross (12), was probably first struck, and thence became the conductor of that great quantity.

24. The plate of which the vane was formed, being thicker near the spindle, and diminishing in thickness gradually to the other end (17), was probably not of copper plated by passing between rollers, for they would have left it of equal thickness; but of metal plated by the hammer. The surface, too, of rolled copper is even and plain; that of hammered is generally uneven, with hollows occasioned by the impressions of the hammer.

25. In those concave impressions the metal is thinner than it is around them, and probably thinnest near the centre of each impression.

26. The lightning, which in passing through the vane was not sufficient to melt its thicker parts, might be sufficient to melt the thinner (6, 7, 8, 9), and to soften those that were in the middle state.

27. The part of the tin (18) which covered the thinner parts, being more easily melted and exploded than copper (10), might possibly be exploded

when the copper was but melted. The smoke appearing in several places (20) is a proof of explosion.

28. There might probably be more tin in the concave impressions of the hammer on one side of the plate, than on the convex part of those impressions on the other. Hence stronger explosions on the concave side.

29. The nature of these explosions is to act violently in all directions; and in this case, being near the plate, they would act against it on one side, while they acted against the air on the other.

30. These thin parts of the plate being at the same instant partly in fusion, and partly so softened as to be near it, the softened parts were pushed outwards, a hole made, and some of the melted parts blown away; hence there was not left metal enough to re-fill the vacancy by bending back the ragged parts to their places.

31. The concave impressions of the hammer, being indifferently made on both sides of the plate, it is natural, from 28, 29, 30, that the pushing outwards of the softened metal by explosions, should be on both sides of the plate nearly equal.

32. That the force of a simple electrical explosion is very great, appears from the Geneva experiment, wherein a spark between two wires, under oil in a drinking-glass, breaks the glass, body, stem, and foot, all to shivers.

33. The electric explosion of metal acts with still more force. A strip of leaf-gold no broader than a straw, exploded between two pieces of thick looking-glass, will break the glass to pieces, though confined

by the screws of a strong press; and, between two pieces of marble pressed together by a weight of twenty pounds, will lift that weight. Much less force is necessary to move the melted and softened parts of a thin plate of copper.

34. This explication of the appearances on the vane is drawn from what we already know of electricity and the effects of lightning. The learned author of the account gives a different but very ingenious one, which he draws from the appearances themselves. The matter pushed out of the holes is found, that of some on one side of the plate, and of others on the other. Hence he supposes them to be occasioned (if I understand him right) by streams or threads of electric matter of different and contrary kinds, rushing violently towards each other, and meeting with the vane, so accidentally placed as to be found precisely in the place of their meeting, where it was pierced by all of them, they all striking on both its sides at the same instant. This, however, is so extraordinary an accident as to be, in the author's own opinion, almost miraculous. "Passeranno" (says he) "forse più secoli prima che ritorni tralle infinite combinazioni un caso simile a quello della banderuola che ora abbiamo per mano. Forza è che si esaurisca una non più udita miniera di fulmini sopra una grande città, pressoche seminata di campanili e di banderuole, il che è rarissimo; e può ancora [cento ?] volte ciò succedere, senza che s' incontri giammai un altera banderuola tanto opportunamente situata tra i limiti della fulminea explosione."

35. But, though the author's explication of these

appearances of the vane does not satisfy me, I am not so confident of my own as to propose its being accepted without confirmation by experiment. Those who have strong electric batteries may try it thus: form a little vane of paper, and spot it on both sides by attaching small pieces of leaf-gold, or tinfoil, not exactly opposite to each other; then send the whole force of the battery through the vane, entering at one end of it and going out at the other. If the metal explodes, I imagine it will be found to make holes in the paper, forcing the torn parts out on the sides opposite to the metal. A more expensive, but perhaps a more satisfactory experiment would be to make a new vane as exactly as possible like that in question, in all the particulars of its description, and place it on a tall mast fixed on some hill subject to strokes of lightning, with a better conductor to the earth than the wood of the mast; if this should be struck in the course of a few years, and the same effects appear upon it, it would be still more miraculous to suppose it happened by accident to be exactly situated where those crossing threads of different electricities were afterwards to meet.

36. The perforation of glass bottles when overcharged is, I imagine, a different case, and not explicable by either of these hypotheses. I cannot well suppose the breach to be occasioned by the passage of electricity through it; since a single bottle, though so broken in the discharge, always is found to send round in its usual course the quantity with which it was charged. Then the breach never happens but at the instant of the circuitous dis-

charge, either by the discharging rod, or in overleaping the borders of the glass. Thus, I have been present when a battery of twenty glasses was discharged by the discharging rod, and produced the same effect in its circuit as if none of the bottles had been pierced; and yet, on examining them, we found no less than twelve of them in that situation. Now, all the bottles of the battery being united by a communication of all the outsides together, and of all the insides together, if one of them had been pierced by a forced passage of the different kinds of electricity to meet each other, before the discharge by the discharging rod, it would not only have prevented the passage of the electricity by the common circuit, but it would have saved all the rest of its fellows, by conducting the whole through its own breach. And it is not easy to conceive that twelve bottles in twenty should be so equally strong as to support the whole strength of their charge, till the circuit of their discharge was opened, and then be so equally weak as to break altogether when the weight of that charge was taken off from them by opening the circuits. At some other time I will give you my opinion of this effect, if you desire it.

I have taken the account of this stroke of lightning from an Italian piece, entitled "Analisi d' un nuovo Fenomeno del Fulmine," the dedication of which is subscribed Carlo Barletti, delle Scuole Pie, who, I suppose, is the author. As I do not perfectly understand that language, I may possibly in some things have mistaken that philosopher's meaning. I therefore desire, my dear friend, that you

would not permit this to be published till you have compared and considered it with that original piece, and communicated to me your remarks and corrections. Nor would I in any case have it appear with my name, as perhaps it may occasion disputes, and I have no time to attend to them.

MLXXXII

THE LEYDEN PHIAL AND M. VOLTA'S EXPERIMENT

I thank you for the account you give me of M. Volta's experiment. You judge rightly in supposing that I have not much time at present to consider philosophical matters; but, as far as I understand it from your description, it is only another form of the Leyden phial, and explicable by the same principles. I must, however, own myself puzzled by one part of your account, viz.: "And thus the electric force, once excited, may be kept alive years together," which is perhaps only a mistake. I have known it, indeed, to be continued many months in a phial hermetically sealed, and suppose it may be so preserved for ages; but, though one may, by repeatedly touching the knob of a charged bottle with a small insulated plate, like the upper one of the electrophore, draw an incredible number of sparks successively, that is, one after every touch, and those for a while not apparently different in magnitude, yet at length they will become small, and the charge be finally exhausted. But I am in the wrong to give my opinion till I have seen the experiment.

I like much your pasteboard machine, and think it may, in some respects, be preferable to the very large glass ones constructed here. The Duc de Chaulnes has one, said, if I remember right, to be five feet in diameter. I saw it tried, but it happened not to be in order. B. FRANKLIN.

MLXXXIII

MILITIA PREFERABLE TO REGULAR TROOPS

Abbé Morellet's Questions and Dr. Franklin's Answers.

"Je prie Monsieur Franklin de vouloir bien repondre aux questions suivantes—by a *yes* or *no*.

"Croit-il que les Etats Unis puissent dans la suite et après leur indépendance reconnue, se passer de troupes régulières toujours sur pied?"—Yes.

"Feront-ils mieux de n'avoir que des milices nationales?"—Certainly.

"Des milices coûteront-elles moins cher à l'état ou plutôt à la nation; car ne peut-on pas dire, que, dans un état de choses où tous les citoyens doivent s'exercer à porter les armes, il y a en fin de compte, en perte de temps, en dépenses pour l'armement, pour l'habillement, pour le rassemblement des troupes à certains temps de l'année, etc., une dépense réelle plus grande que celle qu'il faudroit pour tenir sur pied un petit nombre de troupes régulières?"

Supposing a general militia to be equally expensive with a body of regular troops, yet the militia is preferable, because the whole, being especially disciplined, has nothing to fear from a part.

"Monsieur Franklin croit-il qu'on puisse entretenir en Amérique un corps de troupes sur pied dans chaque province conféderée sans mettre la liberté en danger?"

Europe was without regular troops till lately. One powerful prince keeping an army always on foot makes it necessary for his neighbor to do the same to prevent surprise. We have no such dangerous neighbors in America. We shall probably keep magazines of arms and ammunition always filled, and no European power will ever find us so unprovided as England found us at the beginning of this war, or can prepare to invade us with a sufficient force in so short a time as not to give us time sufficient to repel the invader. Mr. F. therefore thinks that, to avoid not only the expense but the danger of keeping up a body of regular troops in time of peace, none of the States separately will do it, nor the Congress for the whole.

MLXXXIV

A LECTURE [1] ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD

When I consider my own weakness and the discerning judgment of those who are to be my audience, I cannot help blaming myself considerably for this

[1] This lecture was transcribed from a manuscript book in Dr. Franklin's handwriting, in the possession of Mr. William Duane, Jr., of Philadelphia. It was probably written for the *Junto*, and when the author was comparatively unpractised as a writer. Its date is not known.—EDITOR.

rash undertaking of mine, being a thing I am altogether unpractised in, and very much unqualified for; but I am especially discouraged when I reflect that you are all my intimate pot-companions, who have heard me say a thousand silly things in conversation, and therefore have not that laudable partiality and veneration for whatever I shall deliver, that good people commonly have for their spiritual guides; that you have no reverence for my habit, nor for the sanctity of my countenance; that you do not believe me inspired or divinely assisted, and therefore will think yourselves at liberty to assent or dissent, approve or disapprove of any thing I advance, canvassing and sifting it, as the private opinion of one of your acquaintance. These are great disadvantages and discouragements; but I am entered and must proceed, humbly requesting your patience and attention.

I propose, at this time, to discourse on the subject of our last conversation, the providence of God in the government of the world. It might be judged an affront to your understandings, should I go about to prove this first principle, the existence of a Deity, and that he is the creator of the universe; for that would suppose you ignorant of what all mankind in all ages have agreed in. I shall therefore proceed to observe, that he must be a being of infinite wisdom, as appears in his admirable order and disposition of things; whether we consider the heavenly bodies, the stars and planets, and their wonderful regular motions; or this earth, compounded of such an excellent mixture of all the elements; or the admirable

structure of animate bodies of such infinite variety, and yet every one adapted to its nature and the way of life it is to be placed in, whether on earth, in the air, or in the water, and so exactly that the highest and most exquisite human reason cannot find a fault, and say this would have been better so, or in such a manner; which whoever considers attentively and thoroughly will be astonished and swallowed up in admiration.

That the Deity is a being of great goodness, appears in his giving life to so many creatures, each of which acknowledges it a benefit, by its unwillingness to leave it; in his providing plentiful sustenance for them all, and making those things that are most useful, most common and easy to be had; such as water, necessary for almost every creature to drink; air, without which few could subsist; the inexpressible benefits of light and sunshine to almost all animals in general; and to men, the most useful vegetables, such as corn, the most useful of metals, as iron, etc., the most useful animals, as horses, oxen, and sheep, he has made easiest to raise or procure in quantity or numbers; each of which particulars, if considered seriously and carefully, would fill us with the highest love and affection.

That he is a being of infinite power appears in his being able to form and compound such vast masses of matter, as this earth, and the sun, and innumerable stars and planets, and give them such prodigious motion, and yet so to govern them in their greatest velocity, as that they shall not fly out of their appointed bounds, nor dash one against another

for their mutual destruction. But it is easy to conceive his power, when we are convinced of his infinite knowledge and wisdom. For, if weak and foolish creatures as we are, by knowing the nature of a few things, can produce such wonderful effects—such as, for instance, by knowing the nature only of nitre and sea-salt mixed we can make a water which will dissolve the hardest iron, and by adding one ingredient more can make another water which will dissolve gold and make the most solid bodies fluid; and by knowing the nature of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, with those mean ingredients mixed we can shake the air in the most terrible manner, destroy ships, houses, and men at a distance, and in an instant overthrow cities, and rend rocks into a thousand pieces, and level the highest mountains,—what power must he possess, who not only knows the nature of everything in the universe, but can make things of new natures with the greatest ease and at his pleasure!

Agreeing, then, that the world was at first made by a being of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, which being we call God, the state of things existing at this time must be in one of these four following manners, namely:

1. Either he unchangeably decreed and appointed every thing that comes to pass, and left nothing to the course of nature, nor allowed any creature free agency;

2. Without decreeing any thing, he left all to general nature and the events of free agency in his creatures, which he never alters or interrupts; or,

3. He decreed some things unchangeably, and left others to general nature and the events of free agency, which also he never alters or interrupts; or,

4. He sometimes interferes by his particular providence, and sets aside the effects which would otherwise have been produced by any of the above causes.

I shall endeavor to show the first three suppositions to be inconsistent with the common light of reason, and that the fourth is most agreeable to it, and therefore most probably true.

In the first place, if you say he has in the beginning unchangeably decreed all things and left nothing to nature or free agency, these strange conclusions will necessarily follow: 1. That he is now no more a God. It is true, indeed, before he made such unchangeable decree, he was a being of power almighty; but now, having determined every thing, he has divested himself of all further power, he has done and has no more to do, he has tied up his hands and has now no greater power than an idol of wood or stone; nor can there be any more reason for praying to him or worshipping of him than of such an idol, for the worshippers can never be better for such worship. Then, 2. He has decreed some things contrary to the very notion of a wise and good being; such as, that some of his creatures or children shall do all manner of injury to others, and bring every kind of evil upon them without cause; that some of them shall even blaspheme him, their Creator, in the most horrible manner; and, which is still more highly absurd, he has decreed, that the greatest part

of mankind shall in all ages put up their earnest prayers to him, both in private and publicly in great assemblies, when all the while he had so determined their fate that he could not possibly grant them any benefits on that account, nor could such prayers be in any way available. Why then should he ordain them to make such prayers? It cannot be imagined that they are of any service to him. Surely it is not more difficult to believe the world was made by a god of wood or stone, than that the God who made the world should be such a God as this.

In the second place, if you say he has decreed nothing, but left all things to general nature and the events of free agency, which he never alters or interrupts, then these conclusions will follow: he must either utterly hide himself from the works of his own hands, and take no notice at all of their proceedings, natural or moral, or he must be, as undoubtedly he is, a spectator of everything, for there can be no reason or ground to suppose the first. I say there can be no reason to imagine he would make so glorious a universe merely to abandon it. In this case, imagine the Deity looking on and beholding the ways of his creatures. Some heroes in virtue he sees are incessantly endeavoring the good of others; they labor through vast difficulties, they suffer incredible hardships and miseries to accomplish this end, in hopes to please a good God, and attain his favors, which they earnestly pray for. What answer can he make, then, within himself, but this? *Take the reward chance may give you; I do not intermeddle in these affairs.* He sees others continually doing all

manner of evil, and bringing by their actions misery and destruction among mankind. What can he say here but this? *If chance rewards you, I shall not punish you; I am not to be concerned.* He sees the just, the innocent, and the beneficent in the hands of the wicked and violent oppressor, and when the good are at the brink of destruction, they pray to him: *Thou, O God, art mighty and powerful to save; help us, we beseech thee!* He answers: *I cannot help you; it is none of my business, nor do I at all regard these things.* How is it possible to believe a wise and an infinitely good being can be delighted in this circumstance, and be utterly unconcerned what becomes of the beings and things he has created? For thus we must believe him idle and inactive, and that his glorious attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness are no more to be made use of.

In the third place, if you say he has decreed some things, and left others to the events of nature and free agency, which he never alters or interrupts, still you *un-God* him, if I may be allowed the expression; he has nothing to do; he can cause us neither good nor harm; he is no more to be regarded than a lifeless image, than Dagon, or Baal, or Bell and the Dragon; and, as in both the other suppositions foregoing, that being, which from its power is most able to act, from its wisdom knows best how to act, and from its goodness would always certainly act best, is, in this opinion, supposed to become the most inactive of all beings, and remain everlastingly idle; an absurdity which, when considered or but barely seen, cannot be swallowed without doing the greatest vio-

lence to common reason and all the faculties of the understanding.

We are then necessarily driven to the fourth supposition, that the Deity sometimes interferes by his particular providence, and sets aside the events, which would otherwise have been produced in the course of nature, or by the free agency of men; and this is perfectly agreeable with what we know of his attributes and perfections. But, as some may doubt whether it is possible there should be such a thing as free agency in creatures, I shall just offer one short argument on that account, and proceed to show how the duty of religion necessarily follows the belief of a Providence. You acknowledge that God is infinitely powerful, wise, and good, and also a free agent, and you will not deny that he has communicated to us part of his wisdom, power, and goodness; that is, he has made us, in some degree, wise, potent, and good. And is it, then, impossible for him to communicate any part of his freedom, and make us also in some degree free? Is not even this infinite power sufficient for this? I should be glad to hear what reason any man can give for thinking in that manner. It is sufficient for me to show it is not impossible, and no man, I think, can show it is improbable. Much more might be offered to demonstrate clearly that men are in some degree free agents and accountable for their actions; however, this I may possibly reserve for another separate discourse hereafter, if I find occasion.

Lastly, if God does not sometimes interfere by his providence, it is either because he cannot, or because

he will not. Which of these positions will you choose? There is a righteous nation grievously oppressed by a cruel tyrant; they earnestly entreat God to deliver them. If you say he cannot, you deny his infinite power, which you at first acknowledged. If you say he will not, you must directly deny his infinite goodness. You are of necessity obliged to allow that it is highly reasonable to believe a Providence, because it is highly absurd to believe otherwise.

Now, if it is unreasonable to suppose it out of the power of the Deity to help and favor us particularly, or that we are out of his hearing and notice, or that good actions do not procure more of his favor than ill ones; then I conclude that, believing a Providence, we have the foundation of all true religion; for we should love and revere the Deity for his goodness, and thank him for his benefits; we should adore him for his wisdom, fear him for his power, and pray to him for his favor and protection. And this religion will be a powerful regulator of our actions, give us peace and tranquillity within our own minds, and render us benevolent, useful, and beneficial to others.

MLXXXV

JOURNAL OF THE NEGOTIATION FOR PEACE WITH GREAT BRITAIN, FROM MARCH 21 TO JULY 1, 1782

Passy, 9 May, 1782.

As, since the change of the ministry in England, some serious professions have been made of their

disposition to peace, and of their readiness to enter into a general treaty for that purpose; and as the concerns and claims of five nations are to be discussed in that treaty, which must therefore be interesting to the present age and to posterity, I am inclined to keep a journal of the proceedings, so far as they come to my knowledge; and, to make it more complete, I will first endeavor to recollect what has already past. Great affairs sometimes take their rise from small circumstances. My good friend and neighbor, Madame Brillon, being at Nice all last winter for her health, with her very amiable family, wrote to me that she had met with some English gentry there, whose acquaintance proved agreeable; among them she named Lord Cholmondely, who, she said, had promised to call in his return to England, and drink tea with us at Passy. He left Nice sooner than she supposed, and came to Paris long before her. On the 21st of March I received the following note:

"Lord Cholmondely's compliments to Dr. Franklin; he sets out for London to-morrow evening, and should be glad to see him for five minutes before he went. Lord Cholmondely will call upon him at any time in the morning he shall please to appoint."

"*Thursday evening. Hôtel de Chartres.*"

I wrote for answer that I should be at home all the next morning, and glad to see his Lordship, if he did me the honor of calling on me. He came accordingly. I had before no personal knowledge of this

nobleman. We talked of our friends whom he left at Nice, then of affairs in England, and the late resolutions of the Commons on Mr. Conway's motion. He told me that he knew Lord Shelburne had a great regard for me, that he was sure his lordship would be pleased to hear from me, and that if I would write a line he should have a pleasure in carrying it. On which I wrote the following.

PASSY, 22 March, 1782.

MY LORD:—Lord Cholmondely having kindly offered to take a letter from me to your Lordship, I embrace the opportunity of assuring the continuance of my ancient respect for your talents and virtues, and of congratulating you on the returning good disposition of your country in favor of America, which appears in the late resolutions of the Commons. I am persuaded it will have good effects. I hope it will tend to produce a *general peace*, which I am sure your Lordship, with all good men, desires, which I wish to see before I die, and to which I shall, with infinite pleasure, contribute every thing in my power.

Your friends, the Abbé Morellet and Madame Helvétius, are well. You have made the latter very happy by your present of gooseberry bushes, which arrived in five days, and in excellent order. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

Soon after this we heard from England that a total change had taken place in the ministry, and that

Lord Shelburne had come in as Secretary of State. But I thought no more of my letter, till an old friend and near neighbor of mine many years in London appeared at Passy, and introduced a Mr. Oswald, who, he said, had a great desire to see me; and Mr. Oswald, after some little conversation, gave me the following letters from Lord Shelburne and Mr. Laurens.

"London, 6 April, 1782.

"Dear Sir:—I have been favored with your letter, and am much obliged by your remembrance. I find myself returned nearly to the same situation, which you remember me to have occupied nineteen years ago; and I should be very glad to talk to you as I did then, and afterwards, in 1767, upon the means of promoting the happiness of mankind, a subject much more agreeable to my nature than the best concerted plans for spreading misery and devastation. I have had a high opinion of the compass of your mind, and of your foresight. I have often been beholden to both, and shall be glad to be so again, as far as is compatible with your situation. Your letter, discovering the same disposition, has made me send to you Mr. Oswald. I have had a longer acquaintance with him than even I have had the pleasure to have with you. I believe him an honest man, and, after consulting some of our common friends, I have thought him the fittest for the purpose. He is a pacifical man, and conversant in those negotiations which are most interesting to mankind. This has made me prefer him to any

of our speculative friends, or to any person of higher rank. He is fully apprised of my mind, and you may give full credit to every thing he assures you of. At the same time, if any other channel occurs to you, I am ready to embrace it. I wish to retain the same simplicity and good faith which subsisted between us in transactions of less importance. I have the honor to be, etc."

"London, 7 April, 1782.

"Dear Sir:—Richard Oswald, Esquire, who will do me the honor of delivering this, is a gentleman of the strictest candor and integrity. I dare give such assurances from an experience little short of thirty years, and to add, you will be perfectly safe in conversing freely with him on the business he will introduce, a business which Mr. Oswald has disinterestedly engaged in, from motives of benevolence; and from the choice of the man a persuasion follows, that the electors mean to be in earnest.

"Some people in this country, who have too long indulged themselves in abusing every thing American, have been pleased to circulate an opinion that Dr. Franklin is a very cunning man; in answer to which I have remarked to Mr. Oswald: 'Dr. Franklin knows very well how to manage a cunning man; but, when the Doctor converses or treats with a man of candor, there is no man more candid than himself.' I do not know whether you will ultimately agree on political sketches; but I am sure, as gentlemen, you will part very well pleased with each other. Should you, sir, think proper to communi-

cate to me your sentiments and advice on our affairs, —the more amply the more acceptable, and probably the more serviceable,—Mr. Oswald will take charge of your despatches, and afford a secure means of conveyance.

"To this gentleman I refer you for general information of a journey which I am immediately to make, partly in his company, to Ostend, to file off for the Hague. I feel a willingness, infirm as I am, to attempt doing as much good as can be expected from such a prisoner upon parole. As General Burgoyne is certainly exchanged (a circumstance, by the by, which possibly might have embarrassed us, had your late propositions been accepted), may I presume at my return to offer another lieutenant-general, now in England, a prisoner upon parole, in exchange; or what shall I offer in exchange for myself, a thing in my own estimation of no great value? I have the honor to be, with great respect, and, permit me to add, great reverence, sir, etc.,

"Henry Laurens."

I entered into conversation with Mr. Oswald. He was represented in the letter as fully apprised of Lord Shelburne's mind, and I was desirous of knowing it. All I could learn was, that the new ministry sincerely wished for a peace; that they considered the object of the war, to France and America, as obtained; that, if the independence of the United States was agreed to, there was no other point in dispute, and therefore nothing to hinder a pacification; that they were ready to treat of *peace*, but he intimated

that if France should insist upon terms too humiliating to England, they would still continue the war, having yet great strength and many resources left. I let him know that America would not treat but in concert with France, and that, my colleagues not being here, I could do nothing of importance in the affair; but that, if he pleased, I would present him to M. de Vergennes, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He consenting, I wrote and sent the following letter:

PASSY, 16 April, 1782.

SIR:—An English nobleman, Lord Cholmondely, lately returning from Italy, called upon me here, at the time when we received the news of the first resolutions of the House of Commons relating to America. In conversation, he said that he knew his friend, Lord Shelburne, had a great regard for me, that it would be pleasing to him to hear of my welfare, and receive a line from me, of which he, Lord Cholmondely, should like to be the bearer, adding, if there should be a change of ministry, he believed Lord Shelburne would be employed. I thereupon wrote a few lines, of which I enclose a copy. This day I received an answer, which I also enclose, together with another letter from Mr. Laurens. They both, as your Excellency will see, recommend the bearer, Mr. Oswald, as a very honest, sensible man. I have had a little conversation with him. He tells me that there has been a desire of making a separate peace with America, and continuing the war with France and Spain, but that now all wise people give up that idea as impracticable; and it is his private

opinion that the ministry do sincerely desire a *general peace*, and that they will readily come into it, provided France does not insist upon conditions too humiliating for England, in which case she will make great and violent efforts rather than submit to them, and that much is still in her power, etc.

I told the gentleman that I could not enter into particulars with him, but in concert with the ministers of this court. And I proposed introducing him to your Excellency, after communicating to you the letters he brought me, in case you should think fit to see him, with which he appeared to be pleased. I intend waiting on you to-morrow, when you will please to acquaint me with your intentions, and favor me with your counsels. He had heard nothing of Forth's mission, and the old ministry had not acquainted the new with that transaction. Mr. Laurens came over with him in the same vessel, and went from Ostend to Holland. With great respect, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

The next day, being at court with the foreign ministers, as usual on Tuesdays, I saw M. de Vergennes, who acquainted me that he had caused the letters to be translated, had considered the contents, and should like to see Mr. Oswald. We agreed that the interview should be on Wednesday at ten o'clock. Immediately on my return home, I wrote to Mr. Oswald, acquainting him with what had passed at Versailles, and proposing that he should be with me at half past eight the next morning, in order to proceed thither. I received from him the following answer.

"PARIS, 17 April.

"SIR:—I have the honor of yours by the bearer, and shall be sure to wait on you to-morrow, at half past eight, and am, with much respect, etc.,

"RICHARD OSWALD."

He came accordingly, and we arrived at Versailles punctually. M. de Vergennes received him with much civility. Mr. Oswald not being ready in speaking French, M. de Rayneval interpreted. Mr. Oswald at first thought of sending an express, with the account of the conversation, which continued near an hour, and was offered a passport, but finally concluded to go himself; and I wrote the next day the letter following.

PASSY, 18 April, 1782.

MY LORD:—I have received the letter your Lordship did me the honor of writing to me on the 6th instant. I congratulate you on your new appointment to the honorable and important office you formerly filled so worthily, which must be so far pleasing to you, as it affords you more opportunities of doing good, and of serving your country essentially in its great concerns.

I have conversed a good deal with Mr. Oswald, and am much pleased with him. He appears to me a wise and honest man. I acquainted him that I was commissioned, with others, to treat of and conclude a peace. That full powers were given us for that purpose, and that the Congress promised in good faith to ratify, confirm, and cause to be faithfully observed, the treaty we should make; but that we would not treat separately from France, and I

proposed introducing him to the Count de Vergennes, to whom I communicated your Lordship's letter containing Mr. Oswald's character, as a foundation for the interviews. He will acquaint you that the assurance he gave of his Britannic Majesty's good disposition towards peace was well received, and assurances returned of the same good dispositions in his most Christian Majesty.

With regard to circumstances relative to a treaty, M. de Vergennes observed, that the king's engagements were such that he could not treat without the concurrence of his allies, that the treaty should, therefore, be for a general, not a partial peace; that, if the parties were disposed to finish the war speedily by themselves, it would perhaps be best to treat at Paris, as an ambassador from Spain was already there, and the Commissioners from America might easily and soon be assembled there. Or, if they chose to make use of the proposed mediation, they might treat at Vienna; but that the king was so truly willing to put a speedy end to the war, that he would agree to any place the king of England should think proper.

I leave the rest of the conversation to be related to your Lordship by Mr. Oswald; and, that he might do it more easily and fully than he could by letter, I was of opinion with him, that it would be best he should return immediately and do it *vivâ voce*. Being myself but one of the four persons now in Europe commissioned by the Congress to treat of peace, I can make no propositions of much importance without them. I can only express my wish that, if Mr.

Oswald returns hither, he may bring with him the agreement of your court to treat for a general peace, and the proposal of place and time, that I may immediately write to Messrs. Adams, Laurens, and Jay. I suppose that in this case your Lordship will think it proper to have Mr. Laurens discharged from the engagements he entered into when he was admitted to bail. I desire no other channel of communication between us than that of Mr. Oswald, which I think your Lordship has chosen with much judgment. He will be witness of my acting with all the simplicity and good faith which you do me the honor to expect from me; and, if he is enabled, when he returns hither, to communicate more fully your Lordship's mind on the principal points to be settled, I think it may contribute much to the blessed work our hearts are engaged in.

By the act of Parliament relative to American prisoners, I see the king is empowered to exchange them. I hope those you have in England and Ireland may be sent home soon to their country, in flags of truce, and exchanged for an equal number of your people. Permit me to add that I think it would be well if some kindness were mixed in the transaction, with regard to their comfortable accommodation on shipboard, as these poor unfortunate people have been long absent from their friends, and rather hardly treated. With great and sincere respect, I have the honor to be, my Lord, etc.,

B. Franklin.

To the account contained in this letter of what

passed in the conversation with the minister, I should add his frank declaration that, as the foundation of a good and durable peace should be laid in justice, whenever a treaty was entered upon, he had several demands of justice to make from England. Of this, says he, I give you previous notice. What these demands were he did not particularly say. One occurred to me, viz., reparation for the injury done in taking a number of French ships by surprise, before the declaration of the preceding war, contrary to the law of nations. Mr. Oswald seemed to wish to obtain some propositions to carry back with him; but M. de Vergennes said to him, very properly: "There are four nations engaged in the war against you, who cannot, till they have consulted and know each other's minds, be ready to make propositions. Your court being without allies and alone, knowing its own mind, can express it immediately. It is therefore more natural to expect the first proposition from you."

On our return from Versailles, Mr. Oswald took occasion to impress me with ideas that the present weakness of the government of England, with regard to continuing the war, was owing chiefly to the division of sentiments about it; that, in case France should make demands too humiliating for England to submit to, the spirit of the nation would be roused, unanimity would prevail, and resources would not be wanting. He said there was no want of money in the nation; that the chief difficulty lay in the finding out new taxes to raise it; and perhaps that difficulty might be avoided by shutting up the

exchequer, stopping the payment of the interest of the public funds, and applying that money to the support of the war. I made no reply to this, for I did not desire to discourage their stopping payment, which I considered as cutting the throat of the public credit, and a means of adding fresh exasperation against them with the neighboring nations. Such menaces were besides an encouragement with me, remembering the adage, that *they who threaten are afraid.*

The next morning, when I had written the above letter to Lord Shelburne, I went with it to Mr. Oswald's lodgings, and gave it to him to read before I sealed it; that, in case any thing might be in it with which he was not satisfied, it might be corrected; but he expressed himself much pleased.

In going to him I had also in view the entering into a conversation which might draw out something of the mind of his court on the subject of Canada and Nova Scotia. I had thrown some loose thoughts on paper, which I intended to serve as memorandums for my discourse, but without a fixed intention of showing them to him. On his saying that he was obliged to me for the good opinion I had expressed of him to Lord Shelburne in my letter, and assuring me that he had entertained the same of me, I observed that I perceived Lord Shelburne had placed great confidence in him, and, as we had happily the same in each other, we might possibly, by a free communication of sentiments, and a previous settling of our own minds on some of the important points, be the means of great good, by impressing

our sentiments on the minds of those with whom they might have influence, and where their being received might be of importance.

I then remarked that his nation seemed to desire a reconciliation; that, to obtain this, the party which had been the aggressor and had cruelly treated the other, should show some marks of concern for what was past, and some disposition to make reparation; that perhaps there were things which America might demand by way of reparation, and which England might yield, and that the effect would be vastly greater, if they appeared to be voluntary, and to spring from returning good-will; that I, therefore, wished England would think of offering something to relieve those who had suffered by its scalping and burning parties. Lives indeed could not be restored nor compensated, but the villages and houses wantonly destroyed might be rebuilt, etc. I then touched upon the affair of Canada, and, as in a former conversation he had mentioned his opinion that the giving up of that country to the English, at the last peace, had been a politic act in France, for that it had weakened the ties between England and her colonies, and that he himself had predicted from it the late revolution, I spoke of the occasions of future quarrel that might be produced by her continuing to hold it; hinting at the same time, but not expressing too plainly, that such a situation, to us so dangerous, would necessarily oblige us to cultivate and strengthen our union with France. He appeared much struck with my discourse, and, as I frequently looked at my paper, he desired to see it.

After some little delay, I allowed him to read it; the following is an exact copy.

NOTES FOR CONVERSATION

To make a peace durable, what may give occasion for future wars should if practicable be removed.

The territory of the United States, and that of Canada, by long extended frontiers, touch each other.

The settlers on the frontiers of the American provinces are generally the most disorderly of the people, who, being far removed from the eye and control of their respective governments, are more bold in committing offences against neighbors, and are forever occasioning complaints and furnishing matter for fresh differences between their States.

By the late debates in Parliament, and public writings, it appears that Britain desires a *reconciliation* with the Americans. It is a sweet word. It means much more than mere peace, and what is heartily to be wished for. Nations make a peace whenever they are both weary of making war. But if one of them has made war upon the other unjustly, and has wantonly and unnecessarily done it great injuries, and refuses reparation, though there may, for the present, be peace, the resentment of those injuries will remain, and will break out again in vengeance when occasions offer. These occasions will be watched for by one side, feared by the other, and the peace will never be secure; nor can any cordiality subsist between them.

Many houses and villages have been burnt in America by the English and their allies, the Indians.

I do not know that the Americans will insist on reparation; perhaps they may. But would it not be better for England to offer it? Nothing would have a greater tendency to conciliate, and much of the future commerce and returning intercourse between the two countries may depend on the reconciliation. Would not the advantage of reconciliation by such means be greater than the expense?

If then a way can be proposed, which may tend to efface the memory of injuries, at the same time that it takes away the occasions of fresh quarrels and mischief, will it not be worth considering, especially if it can be done, not only without expense, but be a means of saving?

Britain possesses Canada. Her chief advantage from that possession consists in the trade for peltry. Her expenses in governing and defending that settlement must be considerable. It might be humiliating to her to give it up on the demand of America. Perhaps America will not demand it; some of her political rulers may consider the fear of such a neighbor as a means of keeping the thirteen States more united among themselves and more attentive to military discipline. But on the mind of the people in general would it not have an excellent effect if Britain should voluntarily offer to give up this province, though on these conditions, that she shall, in all times coming, have and enjoy the right of free trade thither, unincumbered with any duties whatsoever; that so much of the vacant lands there shall be sold, as will raise a sum sufficient to pay for the houses burnt by the British troops and their Indians; and also to

indemnify the royalists for the confiscation of their estates?

This is mere conversation matter between Mr. Oswald and Mr. Franklin, as the former is not empowered to make propositions, and the latter cannot make any without the concurrence of his colleagues."

He then told me that nothing in his judgment could be clearer, more satisfactory and convincing, than the reasonings in that paper; that he would do his utmost to impress Lord Shelburne with them; that, as his memory might not do them justice, and it would be impossible for him to express them so well or state them so clearly as I had written them, he begged I would let him take the paper with him, assuring me that he would return it safely into my hands. I at length complied with this request also. We parted exceeding good friends, and he set out for London.

By the first opportunity after his departure I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams, and sent the papers therein mentioned, that he might fully be apprised of the proceedings. I omitted only the paper of *Notes for Conversation* with Mr. Oswald, but gave the substance, as appears in the letter. The reason of my omitting it was, that, on reflection, I was not pleased with my having hinted a reparation to Tories for their forfeited estates, and I was a little ashamed of my weakness in permitting the paper to go out of my hands.

PASSY, 20 April, 1782.

SIR:—I hope your Excellency received the copy of our instructions which I sent by the courier from

Versailles some weeks since. I wrote to you on the 13th, to go by Captain Smedley, and sent a packet of correspondence with Mr. Hartley. Smedley did not leave Paris so soon as I expected; but you should have it by this time.

With this I send a fresh correspondence, which I have been drawn into, viz., 1st, a letter I sent to Lord Shelburne before he was a minister; 2dly, his answer since he was a minister, by Mr. Oswald; 3dly, a letter from Mr. Laurens; 4thly, my letter to M. de Vergennes; 5thly, my answer to Lord Shelburne; 6thly, my answer to Mr. Laurens; 7thly, a copy of Digges' report. These papers will inform you pretty well of what passed between me and Mr. Oswald, except that in a conversation at parting, I mentioned to him that I observed they spoke much in England of obtaining a *reconciliation* with the colonies; that this was more than a peace; that the latter might possibly be obtained without the former; that the cruel injuries constantly done us by burning our towns, etc., had made deep impressions of resentment that would long remain; that much of the advantage to the commerce of England from a peace would depend on a *reconciliation;* that the peace without reconciliation would probably not be durable; that after a quarrel between friends, nothing tended so much to *conciliate* as offers made by the aggressor of reparation for injuries done by him in his passion. And I hinted that, if England should make us a voluntary offer of Canada, expressly for that purpose, it might have a good effect.

Mr. Oswald liked much the idea, and said they

were too much straitened for money to make us pecuniary reparation, but he should endeavor to persuade their doing it this way. He is furnished with a passport to go and return by Calais, and I expect him back in ten or twelve days. I wish you and Mr. Laurens could be here when he arrives, for I shall much want your advice, and cannot act without your concurrence. If the present crisis of your affairs prevents your coming, I hope, at least, Mr. Laurens will be here, and we must communicate with you by expresses, for your letters to me by post are generally opened. I shall write by the next post, requesting Mr. Jay to be here also as soon as possible.

I received your letter advising of your draft on me for a quarter's salary, which will be duly honored. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

Supposing Mr. Laurens to be in Holland with Mr. Adams, I, at the same time, wrote to him the following letter:

Passy, 20 April, 1782.

Sir:—I received, by Mr. Oswald, the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 7th instant. He brought me also a letter from Lord Shelburne, which gave him the same good character that you do, adding: "He is fully apprised of my mind, and you may give full credit to every thing he assures you of." Mr. Oswald, however, could give me no other particulars of his Lordship's mind but that he was sincerely disposed to peace. As the message seemed therefore

rather intended to procure or receive propositions than to make any, I told Mr. Oswald that I could make none but in concurrence with my colleagues in the commission, and that, if we were together, we should not treat but in conjunction with France; and I proposed introducing him to M. de Vergennes, which he accepted.

He made to that minister the same declaration of the disposition of England to peace; who replied that France had assuredly the same good disposition; that a treaty might be immediately begun, but it must be for a *general*, not a *particular* peace. That as to the place he thought Paris might be the most convenient, as Spain had here already an ambassador, and the American Commissioners could easily be assembled here; this upon a supposition of the parties treating directly with each other without the intervention of mediators; but if the mediation was to be used it might be at Vienna. The king, his master, however, was so truly disposed to peace, that he would agree to any place that the king of England should choose, and would, at the treaty, give proof of the confidence that might be placed in any engagements he should then enter into, by the fidelity and exactitude with which he should observe those he already had with his present allies.

Mr. Oswald is returned with these general answers by the way of Calais, and expects to be here again in a few days. I wish it might be convenient for you and Mr. Adams to be here at the same time, but if the present critical situation of affairs there makes his being in Holland necessary just now, I

hope you may nevertheless be here, bringing with you his opinion and advice. I have proposed to Lord Shelburne to discharge you from the obligations you entered into at the time of your enlargement, that you may act more freely in the treaty he desires.

I had done myself the honor of writing to you a few days before the arrival of Mr. Oswald. My letter went by Mr. Young, your secretary, and enclosed a copy of your commission, with an offer of money if you had occasion for any. Hoping that you will not return to England before you have been at Paris, I forbear enlarging on the state of our affairs here and in Spain. M. de Vergennes told me he should be very glad to see you here. I found Mr. Oswald to answer perfectly the character you gave me of him, and was much pleased with him. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

Just after I had despatched these letters I received the following from Mr. Adams.

"Amsterdam, 16 April, 1782.

"Sir:—Yesterday noon Mr. William Vaughan, of London, came to my house with Mr. Laurens, the son of the president, and brought me a line from the latter, and told me the president was at Haerlem and desired to see me. I went to Haerlem and found my old friend at the *Golden Lion*. He told me he was come partly for his health and the pleasure of seeing me, and partly to converse with me and see if he had at present just ideas and views of things,

at least to see if we agreed in sentiment, having been desired by several of the new ministry to do so. I asked him if he was at liberty. He said, No; that he was still under parole, but at liberty to say what he pleased to me. I told him that I could not communicate to him, being a prisoner, even his own instructions, nor enter into any consultation with him as one of our colleagues in the commission for peace; that all I should say to him would be as one private citizen conversing with another; but that, upon all such occasions, I should reserve a right to communicate whatever should pass to our colleagues and allies.

"He said that Lord Shelburne and others of the new ministers were anxious to know whether there was any authority to treat of a separate peace, and whether there could be an accommodation upon any terms short of independence; that he had ever answered them that nothing short of an express or tacit acknowledgment of our independence, in his opinion, would ever be accepted, and that no treaty ever would or could be made separate from France. He asked me if his answers had been right. I told him that I was fully of that opinion. He said that the new ministers had received Digges' report, but his character was such that they did not choose to depend upon it; that a person by the name of Oswald, I think, set off for Paris to see you about the same time he came away to see me.

"I desired him, between him and me, to consider, without saying any thing of it to the ministry, whether we could ever have a real peace with Canada

or Nova Scotia in the hands of the English, and whether we ought not to insist at least upon a stipulation that they should keep no standing army or regular troops, nor erect any fortifications upon the frontiers of either. That at present I saw no motive that we had to be anxious for a peace; and if the nation was not ripe for it upon proper terms, we might wait patiently till they should be so.

"I found the old gentleman perfectly sound in his system of politics. He has a very poor opinion both of the integrity and abilities of the new ministry, as well as the old. He thinks they know not what they are about; that they are spoiled by the same insincerity, duplicity, falsehood, and corruption with the former. Lord Shelburne still flatters the king with ideas of conciliation and a separate peace, etc.; yet the nation and the best men in it are for universal peace and an express acknowledgment of American independence, and many of the best are for giving up Canada and Nova Scotia. His design seemed to be solely to know how far Digges' report was true. After an hour or two of conversation, I returned to Amsterdam, and left him to return to London.

"These are all but artifices to raise the stocks; and if you think of any method to put a stop to them, I will cheerfully concur with you. They now know sufficiently that our commission is to treat of a general peace, and with persons vested with equal powers, and if you will agree to it I will, never to see another messenger that is not a plenipotentiary.

"It is expected that the seventh province, Guelderland, will this day acknowledge American independ-

ence. I think we are in such a situation that we ought not, upon any consideration, to think of a truce or any thing short of an express acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the United States. I should be glad, however, to know your sentiments upon this point. I have the honor to be, etc.,

"JOHN ADAMS."

To the above I immediately wrote the following answer:

PASSY, 20 April, 1782.

SIR:—I have just received the honor of yours, dated the 16th instant, acquainting me with the interview between your Excellency and Mr. Laurens. I am glad to learn that his political sentiments coincide with ours, and that there is a disposition in England to give us up Canada and Nova Scotia.

I like your idea of seeing no more messengers that are not plenipotentiaries; but I cannot refuse seeing again Mr. Oswald, as the minister here considered the letter to me from Lord Shelburne as a kind of authentication given that messenger, and expects his return with some explicit propositions. I shall keep you advised of whatever passes.

The late act of Parliament for exchanging American prisoners *as prisoners of war*, according to the law of nations, *any thing in their commitments notwithstanding*, seems to me a renunciation of their pretensions to try our people as subjects guilty of high treason, and to be a kind of tacit acknowledgment of our independency. Having taken this step, it will

be less difficult for them to acknowledge it expressly. They are now preparing transports to send the prisoners home. I yesterday sent the passports desired of me.

Sir George Grand shows me a letter from Mr. Fizeau, in which he says that, if advantage is taken of the present enthusiasm in favor of America, a loan might be obtained in Holland of five or six millions of florins for America, and if their house is empowered to open it, he has no doubt of success, but that no time is to be lost. I earnestly recommend this matter to you as extremely necessary to the operations of our financier, Mr. Morris, who, not knowing that the greatest part of the last five millions had been consumed by purchase of goods, etc., in Europe, writes me advice of large drafts that he shall be obliged to make upon me this summer.

This court has granted us six millions of livres for the current year; but it will fall vastly short of our occasions, there being large orders to fulfil, and near two millions and a half to pay M. Beaumarchais, besides the interest, bills, etc. The house of Fizeau & Grand is now appointed banker for France by a special commission from the king, and will, on that as well as other accounts, be, in my opinion, the fittest for this operation. Your Excellency, being on the spot, can better judge of the terms, etc., and manage with that house the whole business, in which I should be glad to have no other concern than that of receiving assistance from it when pressed by the dreaded drafts. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

In reply to this, Mr. Adams wrote to me as follows:

"AMSTERDAM, 2 May, 1782.

"SIR:—I am honored with your favor of the 20th of April, and Mr. Laurens' son proposes to carry the letter to his father forthwith. The instructions by the courier from Versailles came safe, as all other despatches by that channel, no doubt, will do. The correspondence with Mr. Hartley I received by Captain Smedley, and will take the first good opportunity by private hand to return it, as well as that with the Earl of Shelburne.

"Mr. Laurens and Mr. Jay will, I hope, be able to meet at Paris; but when it will be in my power to go, I know not. Your present negotiation about peace falls in very well to aid a proposition, which I am instructed to make, as soon as the court of Versailles shall judge proper, of a triple or quadruple alliance. This matter, the treaty of commerce, which is now under deliberation, and the loan, will render it improper for me to quit this station, unless in case of necessity. If there is a real disposition to permit Canada to accede to the American association, I should think there would be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and America, provided our allies are contented too. In a former letter I hinted that I thought an express acknowledgment of our independence might now be insisted on; but I did not mean that we should insist upon such an article in the treaty. If they make a treaty of peace with the United States of America, this is acknowledgment enough for me.

"The affair of a loan gives me much anxiety and

fatigue. It is true, I may open a loan for five millions; but I confess I have no hopes of obtaining so much. The money is not to be had. Cash is not infinite in this country. Their profits by trade have been ruined for two or three years; and there are loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and several other powers, as well as their own national, provincial, and collegiate loans. The undertakers are already loaded with burdens greater than they can bear; and all the brokers in the republic are so engaged that there is scarcely a ducat to be lent but what is promised.

"This is the true cause why we should not succeed; yet they will seek a hundred other pretences. It is considered such an honor and such an introduction to American trade to be the house, that the eagerness to obain the title of American banker is prodigious. Various houses have pretensions, which they set up very high; and, let me choose which I will, I am sure of a cry and clamor.

"I have taken some measures to endeavor to calm the heat, and give general satisfaction, but have as yet small hopes of success. I would strike with any house that would insure the money, but none will undertake it, now it is offered, although several were very ready to affirm that they could, when it began to be talked of. Upon inquiry, they do not find the money easy to obtain, which I could have told them before. It is to me, personally, perfectly indifferent which is the house; and the only question is, which will be able to do best for the interests of the United States. This question, however simple, is not easy

to answer. But I think it clear, after very painful and laborious inquiry for a year and a half, that no house whatever will be able to do much. Enthusiasm, at some times and in some countries, may do a great deal; but there has as yet been no enthusiasm in this country for America strong enough to untie many purses. Another year, if the war continues, perhaps we may do better. I have the honor to be, etc., "JOHN ADAMS."

During Mr. Oswald's absence, I received the following from Mr. Laurens:

"LONDON, 20 April, 1782.

"SIR:—I wrote to you on the 7th instant, by Mr. Oswald, since which, that is to say, on the 28th, I was honored by the receipt of your letter of the 12th, enclosing a copy of the commission for treating for peace, by the hands of Mr. Young. The recognizance, exacted from me by the late ministry, has been vacated and done away by the present; these have been pleased to enlarge me without formal conditions; but, as I would not consent that the United States of America should be outdone in generosity, however late the marks appeared on this side, I took upon me to assure Lord Shelburne, in a letter of acknowledgment for the part which his Lordship had taken for obtaining my release, that Congress would not fail to make a just and adequate return. The only return, in my view, is Lieutenant-General Lord Cornwallis. Congress were pleased some time ago, to offer a British lieutenant-general for my ransom; and, as I am informed a special exchange of Lord Cornwallis for the same object was lately in contem-

plation, it would afford me very great satisfaction to know that you will join me in cancelling the debt of honor which we have impliedly incurred, by discharging his Lordship from the obligations of his parole.

"For my own part, though not a bold adventurer, I think I shall not commit myself to the risk of censure by acting conjunctly with you in such a bargain. I entreat you, sir, at least to reflect on this matter; I shall take the liberty of requesting your determination when I reach the Continent, which will probably happen in a few days.

"Lord Cornwallis, in a late conversation with me, put the following case: 'Suppose,' said his Lordship, 'it shall have been agreed, in America, that Lord Cornwallis should be offered in exchange for Mr. Laurens; don't you think, although you are now discharged, I ought to reap the intended benefit?' A reply from the feelings of the heart, as I love fair play, was prompt: 'Undoubtedly, my Lord, you ought to be, and shall be, in such case, discharged, and I will venture to take the burden upon myself.' Certain legal forms, I apprehend, rendered the discharge of me, without condition, unavoidable; but I had previously refused to accept of myself for nothing, and what I now aim at was understood as an adequate return; it is not to be doubted his Lordship's question was built on this ground.

"I had uniformly and explicitly declared to the people here, people in the first rank of importance, that nothing short of independence, in terms of our treaty of alliance, would induce America to treat for truce or peace, and that no treaty could be had

without the consent of our ally first obtained; in a word, if you mean to have peace, you must seek for a general peace. The doctrine was ill relished, especially by those whose power only could set the machine in motion; but having, since my return from Haerlem, asserted, in very positive terms, that I was confirmed in my former opinions, the late obduracy has been more than a little softened, as you will soon learn from the worthy friend, by whom I addressed you on the 7th, who two days ago set out on his return to Passy and Versailles, with, I believe, a more permanent commission than the former.

"Accept my thanks, sir, for the kind offer of a supply of money. I know too well how much you have been harassed for that article, and too well how low our American finances in Europe are; therefore, if I can possibly avoid it, I will not further trouble you, nor impoverish them, or not till the last extremity. Hitherto I have supported myself without borrowing from anybody, and I am determined to continue living upon my own stock while it lasts; the stock is indeed small; my expenses have been and shall be in a suitable, modest style. I pray God to bless you. I have the honor to be, etc.,

"Henry Laurens.

"P. S.—I judged it proper not only to show the peace commission to Lord Shelburne, but to give his Lordship a copy of it, from an opinion that it would work no evil, being shown elsewhere."

On the 4th of May Mr. Oswald returned, and brought me the following letter from Lord Shelburne:

"SHELBURNE HOUSE, 20 April, 1782.

"DEAR SIR:—I have received much satisfaction in being assured by you that the qualifications of wisdom and integrity, which induced me to make choice of Mr. Oswald as the fittest instrument for the renewal of our friendly intercourse, have also recommended him so effectually to your approbation and esteem. I most heartily wish the influence of this first communication of our mutual sentiments may be extended to a happy conclusion of all our public differences.

"The candor with which the Count de Vergennes expresses his Most Christian Majesty's sentiments and wishes, on the subject of a speedy pacification. is a pleasing omen of its accomplishment. His Majesty is not less decided in the same sentiments and wishes, and it confirms his Majesty's ministers in their intention to act in like manner, as most consonant to the true dignity of a great nation. In consequence of these reciprocal advances, Mr. Oswald is sent back to Paris, for the purpose of arranging and settling with you the preliminaries of time and place; and I have the pleasure to tell you that Mr. Laurens is already discharged from those engagements which he entered into when he was admitted to bail.

"It is also determined that Mr. Fox, from whose department that communication is necessarily to proceed, shall send a proper person, who may confer and settle immediately with the Count de Vergennes the further measures and proceedings which may be judged proper to adopt toward advancing the prosecution of this important business.

"In the meantime, Mr. Oswald is instructed to communicate to you my thoughts upon the principal objects to be settled. Transports are actually preparing for the purpose of conveying your prisoners to America, to be there exchanged; and we trust that you will learn that due attention has not been wanting to their accommodation and good treatment.

"I have the honor to be, with very sincere respect, dear sir, your very faithful and obedient, humble servant,

"SHELBURNE."

Having read the letter, I mentioned to Mr. Oswald the part which refers me to him for his Lordship's sentiments. He acquainted me that they were very sincerely disposed to peace; that the whole ministry concurred in the same disposition; that a good deal of confidence was placed in my character for open, honest dealing; that it was also generally believed I had still remaining some part of my ancient affection and regard for Old England, and it was hoped it might appear on this occasion. He then showed me an extract from the minutes of council, but did not leave the paper with me. As well as I can remember, it was to this purpose:

"At a Cabinet Council, held April 27, 1782, present, Lord Rockingham, Lord Chancellor, Lord President, Lord Camden, etc., etc., to the number of fifteen or twenty, being all ministers and great officers of state.

"It was proposed to represent to his Majesty that it would be well for Mr. Oswald to return to Doctor

Franklin, and acquaint him that it is agreed to treat for a general peace, and at Paris; and that the principal points in contemplation are, the allowing of American independence, on condition that England be put into the same situation that she was left in by the peace of 1763."

Mr. Oswald also informed me that he had conversed with Lord Shelburne on the subject of my paper of *Notes*, relating to reconciliation. That he had shown him the paper, and had been prevailed on to leave it with him a night; but it was on his Lordship's solemn promise of returning it, which had been complied with, and he now returned it to me. That it seemed to have made an impression, and he had reason to believe that matter might be settled to our satisfaction towards the end of the treaty; but in his own mind he wished it might not be mentioned at the beginning. That his Lordship indeed said he had not imagined reparation would be expected, and he wondered I should not know whether it was intended to demand it. Finally, Mr. Oswald acquainted me that as the business now likely to be brought forward more particularly appertained to the department of the other secretary, Mr. Fox, he was directed to announce another agent coming from that department, who might be expected every day, viz., the honorable Mr. Grenville, brother to Lord Temple, and son of the famous Mr. George Grenville, formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer. I immediately wrote the following note to the Count de Vergennes:

Passy, 4 May, 1782.

Sir:— I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency that Mr. Oswald is just returned from London, and is now with me. He has delivered me a letter from Lord Shelburne, which I enclose for your perusal, together with a copy of my letter to which it is an answer. He tells me that it has been agreed in council to treat at Paris, and to treat of a *general peace;* and that, as it is more particularly in the department of Mr. Fox to regulate the circumstantials, a gentleman, Mr. Grenville, to be sent by him for that purpose, may be daily expected here. Mr. Oswald will wait on your Excellency whenever you shall think fit to receive him. I am, with respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

And the next day I received the following answer:

"Versailles, 5 May, 1782.

"Sir:—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me the 4th instant, as also those which accompanied it. I will see you with your friend, with pleasure, at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. I have the honor to be, etc.,

"De Vergennes."

Accordingly, on Monday morning I went with Mr. Oswald to Versailles, and we saw the minister. Mr. Oswald acquainted him with the disposition of his court to treat for a general peace, and at Paris; and he announced Mr. Grenville, who, he said, was to set out about the same time with him, but, as he

would probably come by the way of Ostend, might be a few days longer on the road. Some general conversation passed, agreeable enough, but not of importance.

In our return Mr. Oswald repeated to me his opinion that the affair of Canada would be settled to our satisfaction, and his wish that it might not be mentioned till towards the end of the treaty. He intimated, too, that it was apprehended the greatest obstructions in the treaty might come from the part of Spain; but said, if she was unreasonable, there were means to bring her to reason. That Russia was a friend to England, had lately made great discoveries on the back of North America, could make establishments there, and might easily transport an army from Kamschatka to the coast of Mexico, and conquer all those countries. This appeared a little visionary, at present, but I did not dispute it.

On the whole, I was able to draw so little from Mr. Oswald of the sentiments of Lord Shelburne, who had mentioned him as intrusted with the communication of them, that I could not but wonder at his being sent again to me, especially as Mr. Grenville was so soon to follow.

On Tuesday I was at court, as usual on that day. M. de Vergennes asked me if Mr. Oswald had not opened himself further to me. I acquainted him with the sight I had had of the minute of council, and of the loose expressions contained in it, of what was in contemplation. He seemed to think it odd that he had brought nothing more explicit. I supposed Mr. Grenville might be better furnished. The

next morning I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams:

PASSY, 8 May, 1782.

SIR:—Mr. Oswald, whom I mentioned in a former letter, which I find you have received, is returned, and brought me another letter from Lord Shelburne, of which the above is a copy. It says Mr. Oswald is instructed to communicate to me his Lordship's thoughts. He is, however, very sparing of such communication. All I have got from him is, that the ministry have in contemplation the allowing independence to America, on condition of Britain being put again into the state she was left in by the peace of 1763, which I suppose means being put again in the possession of the islands which France has taken from her. This seems to me a proposition of selling to us a thing that was already our own, and making France pay the price they are pleased to ask for it.

Mr. Grenville, who is sent by Mr. Fox, is expected here daily. Mr. Oswald tells me that Mr. Laurens will soon be here also. Yours of the 2d instant is just come to hand. I shall write to you on this affair hereafter by the court couriers; for I am certain that your letters to me are opened at the post-office, either here or in Holland, and I suppose that mine to you are treated in the same manner. I enclose the cover of your last, that you may see the seal. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

I had but just sent away this letter, when Mr. Oswald came in, bringing with him Mr. Grenville,

who was just arrived. He gave me the following letter from Mr. Secretary Fox:

"St. James, 1 May, 1782.

"Sir:—Though Mr. Oswald will no doubt have informed you of the nature of Mr. Grenville's commission, yet I cannot refrain from making use of the opportunity that his going offers me, to assure you of the esteem and respect which I have borne to your character, and to beg you to believe that no change in my situation has made any in those ardent wishes for reconciliation which I have invariably felt from the very beginning of this unhappy contest.

"Mr. Grenville is fully acquainted with my sentiments upon this subject, and with the sanguine hopes which I have conceived, that those with whom we are contending are too reasonable to continue a contest which has no longer any object, either real or even imaginary. I know your liberality of mind too well to be afraid lest any prejudices against Mr. Grenville's *name* may prevent you from esteeming those excellent qualities of heart and head which belong to him, or from giving the fullest credit to the sincerity of his wishes for peace, in which no man in either country goes beyond him. I am, with great truth and regard, etc.,

"C. J. Fox."

I imagined the gentleman had been at Versailles, as I supposed Mr. Grenville would first have waited on M. de Vergennes before he called on me. But finding, in conversation, that he had not, and that he expected me to introduce him, I immediately

wrote to that minister, acquainting him that Mr. Grenville was arrived, and desired to know when his Excellency would think fit to receive him, and I sent an express with my letter.

I then entered into conversation with him on the subject of his mission, Mr. Fox having referred me to him as being fully acquainted with his sentiments. He said that peace was really wished for by everybody, if it could be obtained on reasonable terms; and as the idea of subjugating America was given up, and both France and America had thereby obtained what they had in view originally, it was hoped that there now remained no obstacle to a pacification. That England was willing to treat of a general peace with all the powers at war against her, and that the treaty should be at Paris.

I did not press him much for further particulars, supposing they were reserved for our interview with M. de Vergennes. The gentlemen did me the honor of staying to dinner with me, on the supposition, which I urged, that my express might be back before we parted. This gave me an opportunity of a good deal of general conversation with Mr. Grenville, who appeared to me a sensible, judicious, intelligent, good-tempered, and well-instructed young man, answering well the character Mr. Fox had given me of him.

They left me, however, about six o'clock, and my messenger did not return till near nine. He brought me the answer of the Count de Vergennes, that he was glad to hear of Mr. Grenville's arrival, and would be ready to receive us to-morrow at half past

ten or eleven o'clock. I immediately enclosed his note in one to Mr. Grenville, requesting him to be with me at Passy by eight, that we might have time to breakfast before we set out. I have preserved no copy of these three last-mentioned notes, or I should have inserted them, as I think that, though they seem of almost too trifling a nature, they serve usefully sometimes to settle dates, authenticate facts, and show something of the turn and manner of thinking of the writers on particular occasions. The answer I received was as follows:

"Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin, and will certainly do himself the honor of waiting upon Mr. Franklin to-morrow morning at eight o'clock.

"*Rue de Richelieu, Wednesday night.*"

We set out accordingly the next morning in my coach, and arrived punctually at Count de Vergennes', who received Mr. Grenville in the most cordial manner, on account of the acquaintance and friendship that had formerly subsisted between his uncle and the Count de Vergennes, when they were ambassadors together at Constantinople.

After some little agreeable conversation, Mr. Grenville presented his letters from Mr. Secretary Fox, and, I think, from the Duke of Richmond. When these were read, the subject of peace was entered upon. What my memory retains of the discourse amounts to little more than this, that, after mutual declarations of the good dispositions of the two courts, Mr. Grenville having intimated that, in case

England gave America independence, France, it was expected, would restore the conquests she had made of British islands, receiving back those of Miquelon and St. Pierre. And, the original object of the war being obtained, it was supposed that France would be contented with that. The minister seemed to smile at the proposed exchange, and remarked, the offer of giving independence to America amounted to little. "America," said he, "does not ask it of you; there is Mr. Franklin, he will answer you as to that point." "To be sure," I said, "we do not consider ourselves as under any necessity of bargaining for a thing that is our own, which we have bought at the expense of much blood and treasure, and which we are in possession of." "As to our being satisfied with the original object of the war," continued he, "look back to the conduct of your nation in former wars. In the last war, for example, what was the object? It was the disputed right of some waste lands on the Ohio and the frontiers of Nova Scotia. Did you content yourselves with the recovery of those lands? No, you retained at the peace all Canada, all Louisiana, all Florida, Grenada, and other West India islands, the greatest part of the northern fisheries, with all your conquests in Africa and the East Indies." Something being mentioned of its not being reasonable that a nation, after making an unprovoked and unsuccessful war upon its neighbors, should expect to sit down whole and have every thing restored which she had lost in such a war, I think Mr. Grenville remarked, the war had been provoked by the encouragement given by France to

the Americans to revolt. On which the Count de Vergennes grew a little warm, and declared, firmly, that the breach was made, and our independence declared, long before we received the least encouragement from France; and he defied the world to give the smallest proof of the contrary. "There sits," said he, "Mr. Franklin, who knows the fact, and can contradict me if I do not speak the truth."

He repeated to Mr. Grenville what he had before said to Mr. Oswald, respecting the king's intention of treating fairly, and keeping faithfully the conventions he should enter into, of which disposition he should give at the treaty convincing proofs by the fidelity and exactitude with which he should observe his engagements with his present allies, and added that the points which the king had chiefly in view were *justice* and *dignity;* these he could not depart from. He acquainted Mr. Grenville that he should immediately write to Spain and Holland, communicate to those courts what had passed, and request their answers; that, in the meantime, he hoped Mr. Grenville would find means of amusing himself agreeably, to which he should be glad to contribute; that he would communicate what had passed to the king, and he invited him to come again the next day.

On our return Mr. Grenville expressed himself as not quite satisfied with some part of the Count de Vergennes' discourse, and was thoughtful. He told me that he had brought two state messengers with him, and perhaps, after he had had another interview with the minister, he might despatch one of them to London. I then requested leave to answer,

by that opportunity, the letters I had received from Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox, and he kindly promised to acquaint me in time of the messenger's departure. He did not ask me to go with him the next day to Versailles, and I did not offer it.

The coming and going of these gentlemen were observed, and made much talk at Paris; and the Marquis de Lafayette, having learned something of their business from the minister, discoursed with me about it. Agreeably to the resolutions of Congress, directing me to confer with him and take his assistance in our affairs, I communicated with him what had passed. He told me that, during the treaty at Paris for the last peace, the Duke de Nivernais had been sent to reside in London, that this court might, through him, state what was from time to time transacted in the light they thought best, to prevent misrepresentations and misunderstandings. That such an employ would be extremely agreeable to him on many accounts; that as he was now an American citizen, spoke both languages, and was well acquainted with our interests, he believed he might be useful in it; and that, as peace was likely, from appearances, to take place, his return to America was perhaps not so immediately necessary. I liked the idea, and encouraged his proposing it to the ministry. He then wished I would make him acquainted with Messrs. Oswald and Grenville, and for that end proposed meeting them at breakfast with me, which I promised to contrive if I could, and endeavor to engage them for Saturday.

Friday morning, the 10th of May, I went to Paris

and visited Mr. Oswald. I found him in the same friendly dispositions, and very desirous of good, and seeing an end put to this ruinous war. But I got no further sight as to the sentiments of Lord Shelburne respecting the terms. I told him the Marquis de Lafayette would breakfast with me to-morrow, and as he, Mr. Oswald, might have some curiosity to see a person who had in this war rendered himself so remarkable, I proposed his doing me the same honor. He agreed to it cheerfully. I came home intending to write to Mr. Grenville, who I supposed might stay and dine at Versailles, and therefore did not call on him. But he was returned, and I found the following note from him:

"PARIS, 10 May, 1782.

"Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin; he proposes sending a courier to England at ten o'clock to-night, and will give him in charge any letters Mr. Franklin may wish to send by him."

I sat down immediately and wrote the two short letters following to the secretaries of state:

TO CHARLES J. FOX

PASSY, 10 May, 1782.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Mr. Grenville, whom I find to be a sensible, judicious, and amiable gentleman. The name, I assure you, does not with me lessen the regard his excellent qualities inspire. I introduced him as soon as possible to Count de Vergennes; he will himself give you an account of his reception. I

hope his coming may forward the blessed work of pacification, in which, for the sake of humanity, no time should be lost; no reasonable cause, as you observe, existing for the continuance of this abominable war. Be assured of my endeavors to put an end to it.

I am much flattered by the good opinion of a person I have long highly esteemed, and I hope it will not be lessened by my conduct in the affair that has given rise to our correspondence. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

TO LORD SHELBURNE

Passy, 10 May, 1782.

My Lord:—I have received the honor of your Lordship's letter, dated the 28th past, by Mr. Oswald, informing me that he is sent back to settle with me the preliminaries of time and place. Paris, as the place, seemed to me yesterday to be agreed on, between Mr. Grenville and M. de Vergennes, and is perfectly agreeable to me. The time cannot well be settled till this court has received answers from Madrid and the Hague, and until my colleagues are arrived. I expect daily Messrs. Jay and Laurens. Mr. Adams doubts whether he can be here, but that will not hinder our proceeding.

It gave me great pleasure to hear Mr. Laurens is discharged entirely from the obligations he had entered into. I am much obliged by the readiness. with which your Lordship has conferred that favor. Please to accept my thankful acknowledgments.

I am happy, too, in understanding from your letter that transports are actually preparing to convey our prisoners to America, and that attention will be paid to their accommodation and good treatment. Those people on their return will be dispersed through every part of America, and the accounts they will have to give of any marks of kindness received by them under the present ministry, will lessen much the resentment of their friends against the nation for the hardships they suffered under the *past.*

Mr. Oswald rests here awhile by my advice, as I think his presence likely to be useful. With great and sincere respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

And I sent them to Mr. Grenville with the following note:

Mr. Franklin presents his compliments to Mr. Grenville, and thanks him for the information of his courier's departure, and his kind offer of forwarding Mr. Franklin's letter; he accepts the favor and encloses two.

The Marquis de Lafayette and Mr. Oswald will do Mr. Franklin the honor of breakfasting with him to-morrow between nine and ten o'clock. Mr. Franklin will also be happy to have the company of Mr. Grenville if agreeable to him. He should have waited upon Mr. Grenville to-day at Paris, but he imagined Mr. Grenville was at Versailles.

Passy, Friday evening, May 10th.

To which Mr. Grenville sent me this answer:

"Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin, and will, with great pleasure, do himself the honor of breakfasting with Mr. Franklin to-morrow between nine and ten o'clock. Mr. Grenville was at Versailles to-day, and should have been sorry if Mr. Franklin should have given himself the trouble of calling at Paris this morning. The courier shall certainly take particular care of Mr. Franklin's letters.

"*Paris, Friday, May 10th.*"

The gentlemen all met accordingly, had a good deal of conversation at and after breakfast, stayed till after one o'clock, and parted much pleased with each other.

The Monday following, I called to visit Mr. Grenville. I found with him Mr. Oswald, who told me he was just about returning to London. I was a little surprised at the suddenness of the resolution he had taken, it being, as he said, to set out the next morning early. I conceived the gentleman was engaged in business, so I withdrew, and went to write a few letters, among which was the following to Lord Shelburne, being really concerned at the thought of losing so good a man as Mr. Oswald:

PASSY, 13 May, 1782.

MY LORD:—I did myself the honor of writing to your Lordship a few days since, by Mr. Grenville's courier, acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 28th past, by Mr. Oswald.

I then hoped that gentleman would have re-

mained here some time, but his affairs, it seems, recall him sooner than he imagined. I hope he will return again, as I esteem him more, the more I am acquainted with him, and believe his moderation, prudent counsels, and sound judgment may contribute much, not only to the speedy conclusion of a peace, but to the framing of such a peace as may be firm and lasting. With great respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

I went in the evening to Mr. Oswald's lodging with my letters, when he informed me his intention was to return immediately hither from England; and, to make the more despatch in going and returning, he should leave his carriage at Calais, as the embarking and debarking of carriages in the packet boats often occasioned a tide's delay. I did not inquire the reason of this movement. We had but little conversation, for Mr. Grenville coming in, I soon after wished him a good journey and retired, that I might not interrupt their consultations.

Since his departure, Mr. Grenville has made me a visit; and entered into conversation with me, exactly of the same tenor with the letters I formerly received from Mr. Hartley, stating suppositions that France might insist on points totally different from what had been the object of our alliance, and that, in such case, he should imagine we were not at all bound to continue the war to obtain such points for her, etc. I thought I could not give him a better answer to this kind of discourse than what I had given in two letters to Mr. Hartley, and, therefore,

calling for those letters, I read them to him. He smiled, and would have turned the conversation; but I gave a little more of my sentiments on the general subject of benefits, obligation, and gratitude. I said I thought people had often imperfect notions of their duty on those points, and that a state of obligation was to many so uneasy a state that they became ingenious in finding out reasons and arguments to prove that they had been laid under no obligation at all, or that they had discharged it, and they too easily satisfied themselves with such arguments.

To explain clearly my ideas on the subject, I stated a case. A, a stranger to B, sees him about to be imprisoned for a debt by a merciless creditor; he lends him the sum necessary to preserve his liberty. B then becomes the debtor of A, and, after some time, repays the money. Has he then discharged the obligation? No. He has discharged the money debt, but the obligation remains, and he is a debtor for the kindness of A, in lending him the sum so seasonably. If B should afterwards find A in the same circumstances that he, B, had been in when A lent him the money, he may then discharge this obligation or debt of kindness, *in part*, by lending him an equal sum. *In part*, I said, and not *wholly*, because when A lent B the money there had been no prior benefit received to induce him to it. And, therefore, if A should a second time need the same assistance, I thought B, if in his power, was in duty bound to afford it to him.

Mr. Grenville conceived that it was carrying gratitude very far to apply this doctrine to our situation

in respect to France, who was really the party served and obliged by our separation from England, as it lessened the power of her rival and relatively increased her own.

I told him I was so strongly impressed with the kind assistance afforded us by France in our distress, and the generous and noble manner in which it was granted without extracting or stipulating for a single privilege or particular advantage to herself in our commerce, or otherwise, that I could never suffer myself to think of such reasonings for lessening the obligation, and I hoped, and, indeed, did not doubt, but my countrymen were all of the same sentiments.

Thus he gained nothing of the point he came to push; we parted, however, in good humor. His conversation is always polite, and his manner pleasing. As he expressed a strong desire to discourse with me on the means of a reconciliation with America, I promised to consider the subject, and appointed Saturday, the first day of June, for our conversation, when he proposed to call on me. The same day I received another letter from my old friend, Mr. Hartley. Our former correspondence on the subject of peace since the beginning of this year I have kept by itself, as it preceded this, was in the time of the old ministry, and consisted wholly of letters unmixed with personal conversation. This being the first letter from him under the new ministry, and as it may be followed by others, which may relate to the negotiation, I insert it here, with my answer, and shall continue to insert the future letters I may receive from him relative to the same subject.

"London, 3 May, 1782.

"My Dear Friend:—I write to you only one line, just to inform you that a general order is issued by our government for the release of all the American prisoners everywhere. I have had this from Lord Shelburne, who informed me that the order was not partial or conditional, but general and absolute. I heartily congratulate you upon this first step towards *sweet reconciliation*. I hope other things will follow. I had a long conversation with Lord Shelburne relating to America, in which he expressed himself in most favorable terms. I shall have the honor of seeing and conversing with you again. But at present, as you know, certain matters are depending from your side of the water.

"Mr. Laurens is entirely at liberty. I see him very frequently, and when you see him he will tell you many things from me, which have occurred to me in my poor endeavours to promote the cause of peace. *Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris*. Your affectionate, etc.,

"D. Hartley."

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 13 May, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—I have just received your favor of the 3d instant. I thank you much for the good news you give me, that 'an order is issued by your government for the release of all the American prisoners *everywhere*, an order not *partial* or *conditional*, but *general* and *absolute*.' I rejoice with you in this step, not only on account of the unhappy captives, who by it will be set at liberty and restored

to their friends and families, but as I think it will tend greatly towards a reconciliation, on which alone the hope of a durable peace can be founded. I am much indebted to your good brother for a very kind and obliging letter, which was mislaid when it should have been answered. I beg you would present to him my thankful acknowledgments and my sincere respects. I join you most heartily in the prayer that ends your letter, *Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris*. I am ever, my friend, yours most affectionately, B. Franklin.

Our business standing still at present, till the return of Mr. Oswald, gives me a void, that I may fill up with two or three circumstances not at present connected with this intended treaty, but which serve to show something of the disposition of courts who have, or may have, a concern in it.

Mr. Jay had written to me, from time to time of the unaccountable delays he has met with since his residence at the court of Spain, and that he was now no nearer in the business he had been charged with than when he first arrived. Upon the first coming of Mr. Oswald, and the apparent prospect of a treaty, I wrote to press his coming hither, and, being a little out of humor with that court, I said: They have taken four years to consider whether they should treat with us, give them forty, and let us mind our own business; and I sent the letter under cover to a person at Madrid, who I hoped would open and read it.

It seems to me that we have, in most instances,

hurt our credit and importance by sending all over Europe, begging alliances and soliciting declarations of our independence. The nations, perhaps, from thence seemed to think that our independence is something they have to sell and that we do not offer enough for it. Mr. Adams has succeeded in Holland, owing to their war with England, and a good deal to the late votes in the Commons towards a reconciliation; but the ministers of the other powers refused, as I hear, to return his visits because our independence was not yet acknowledged by their courts. I had heard here, by good luck, that the same resolution was taken by several of them not to return the visits I should make them (as they supposed) when I was first received here as Minister Plenipotentiary, and disappointed their project by visiting none of them. In my private opinion, the first civility is due from the old resident to the stranger and new-comer. My opinion, indeed, is good for nothing against custom, which I should have obeyed, but for the circumstances, that rendered it more prudent to avoid disputes and affronts, though at the hazard of being thought rude or singular.

While I am writing, something ridiculous enough on this head has happened to me. The Count du Nord, who is son of the Empress of Russia, arriving at Paris, ordered, it seems, cards of visit to be sent to all the foreign ministers. One of them, on which was written, "*Le Comte du Nord et le Prince Bariatinski*," was brought to me. It was on Monday evening last. Being at court the next day, I inquired of an old minister, my friend, what was the

etiquette, and whether the Count received visits. The answer was: "*Non; on se fait écrire; voilà tout.*" This is done by passing the door and ordering your name to be written on the porter's book. Accordingly, on Wednesday I passed the house of Prince Bariatinski, Ambassador of Russia, where the Count lodged, and left my name on the list of each. I thought no more of the matter; but this day, May the 24th, comes the servant who brought the card, in great affliction, saying he was like to be ruined by his mistake in bringing the card here, and wishing to obtain from me some paper, of I know not what kind, for I did not see him.

In the afternoon came my friend, M. Le Roy, who is also a friend of the Prince's, telling me how much he, the Prince, was concerned at the accident, that both himself and the Count had great personal regard for me and my character, but that, our independence not yet being acknowledged by the court of Russia, it was impossible for him to permit himself to make me a visit as minister. I told M. Le Roy it was not my custom to seek such honors, though I was very sensible of them when conferred upon me; that I should not have voluntarily intruded a visit, and that, in this case, I had only done what I was informed the etiquette required of me; but if it would be attended with any inconvenience to Prince Bariatinski, whom I much esteemed and respected, I thought the remedy was easy; he had only to erase my name out of his book of visits received, and I would burn their card.

All the northern princes are not ashamed of a

little civility committed towards an American. The king of Denmark, travelling in England under an assumed name, sent me a card expressing in strong terms his esteem for me and inviting me to dinner with him at St. James'. And the ambassador from the king of Sweden lately asked me whether I had powers to make a treaty of commerce with their kingdom, for, he said, his master was desirous of such a treaty with the United States, had directed him to ask me the question, and had charged him to tell me that it would flatter him greatly to make it with a person whose character he so much esteemed, etc. Such compliments might make me a little proud, if we Americans were not naturally as much so already as the porter, who, being told he had with his burden jostled the Great Czar, Peter, then in London, walking the street: "*Poh!*" says he, "*we are all Czars here.*"

I did not write by Mr. Oswald to Mr. Laurens, because, from some expressions in his last to me, I expected him here, and I desired Mr. Oswald, if he found him still in London, or met him on the road, to give him that reason. I am disappointed in my expectation, for I have now received (May 25th) the following letter from him:

"OSTEND, 17 May, 1782.

"SIR:—I had the honor of addressing you on the 30th ultimo by post, a duplicate of which will accompany this, in order to guard against the effect of a miscarriage in the first instance, and I beg leave to refer you to the contents.

"On the 10th current and no sooner, your very obliging favor of the 20th preceding reached me in London. Being then on the point of leaving that place, I deferred a reply until my arrival on this side. This happened yesterday, too late to catch the post of the day, except by a single letter, put into my hands, I believe, by Dr. Price, which I sent forward.

"I sincerely and heartily thank you, sir, for the cordial contents of your last letter; but, from the most mature reflection, and taking into consideration my present very infirm state of health, I have resolved to decline accepting the honor intended me by Congress, in the commission for treating with Great Britain, and I find the less difficulty in coming to this determination, from a persuasion in my own mind that my assistance is not essential, and that it was not the view or expectation of our constituents that every one named in the commission should act. I purpose to repair to, or near Mr. Adams, and inquire of him whether I may yet be serviceable under the commission to which I had been first appointed, that for borrowing money for the use of the United States. If he speaks in the affirmative, I shall, though much against my own grain, as is well known at our little court, proceed in the mission with diligence and fidelity; otherwise, I shall take a convenient opportunity of returning to give an account there, of having in the course of two years and upwards done nothing, excepting only the making a great number of rebels in the enemy's country, and reconciling thousands to the doctrine of absolute and unlimited independence; a doctrine which

I asserted and maintained with as much freedom in the Tower of London, as I ever had done in the State House at Philadelphia; and having contentedly submitted to the loss of my estate, and being ready to lay down my life in support of it, I had the satisfaction of perceiving the coming of converts every day. I must not, however, conclude this head without assuring you that should you think proper to ask questions respecting American commerce, or the interest of any particular State, I will answer with candor and the best judgment I am possessed of; but of that judgment I sincerely protest I have the utmost diffidence. God prosper your proceedings in the great work; you will be called blessed by all the grateful of the present generation, and your name will be celebrated by posterity. I feel myself happy in reflecting that in the great outlines of a treaty our opinions exactly coincide, that we shall not want the countenance and assistance of our great and good ally, and that you have so honest a man as Mr. Oswald to deal with for preliminaries. I know him to be superior to chicanery, and am sure he will not defile his mind by attempting any dirty thing.

"I entreat you, sir, to present my humble respects to M. de Vergennes, and thank his Excellency for his polite expressions respecting me, and be so good as to say all that shall appear necessary in excuse for my non-appearance at his court.

"Lord Cornwallis called on me the day before I left London, and was, as you may suppose, very anxious to know when he might probably hear from me on the subject of his release; let me therefore

request your opinion in answer to what I had the honor of writing in my last concerning that affair. I wish it may prove satisfactory to his Lordship by enabling me, with your consent and concurrence, to cancel a debt, which does not sit easy upon me, and which cannot, with honor to our country, remain unpaid. I think we shall not, it is impossible we should, incur displeasure by doing an act of common justice, and our authority may be fairly implied.

"His Lordship declares he has no intention of returning to America, but desires to be reinstated in his legislative and military character in his own country, and I am of opinion that in the former he will rather be friendly to us than otherwise. For my own part, if the war continues, I should not be uneasy if his Lordship were to go to the Chesapeake again.

"I have a thousand compliments and good wishes to present to you from friends in England, where, males and females, I am sure you have at least so many that your own remembrance will lead you to individuals of your old acquaintance.

"To-morrow I intend to proceed to Brussels, and thence, probably, to the Hague and Amsterdam. My movements must, unavoidably, be as slow as water carriage. My weak under-limbs cannot bear continual thumping on the pavement in the rough machines of this country, and the feebleness of my pocket will not admit the indulgence of a more convenient vehicle. I beg, sir, you will write to me at the house of Mr. Edward Jennings, or under the protection of any other friend in that city that will be

at the trouble of finding out a voyager who is, at all times and in all places, with the highest esteem and respect, sir, etc.,

"Henry Laurens."

To the above I wrote the following answer:

Passy, 25 May, 1782.

Sir:—I am now honored with yours of the 17th. I had before received one of the 7th, which remained unanswered, because from the words in it, 'when I reach the Continent, which will probably happen in a few days,' I flattered myself with the pleasure of seeing you here. That hope is disappointed by your last, in which you tell me you are determined not to act in the commission for treating of peace with Great Britain. I regret your taking this resolution, principally because I am persuaded that your assistance must have been of great service to our country. But I have besides some private or particular reasons that relate to myself.

To encourage me in the arduous task, you kindly tell me I shall be called *blessed, etc.* I have never yet known of a peace made that did not occasion a great deal of popular discontent, clamor, and censure on both sides. This is, perhaps, owing to the usual management of the leaders and ministers of the contending nations, who, to keep up the spirits of their people for continuing the war, generally represent the state of their own affairs in a better light, and that of the enemy in a worse, than is consistent with the truth; hence the populace on each side expect better terms than can really be obtained, and are apt

to ascribe their disappointment to treachery. Thus the peace of Utrecht and that of Aix-la-Chapelle were said in England to have been influenced by French gold, and in France by English guineas. Even the last peace, the most glorious and advantageous for England that ever she made, was, you may remember, violently decried, and the makers as violently abused. So that the blessing promised to peacemakers, I fancy, relates to the next world, for in this they seem to have a greater chance of being cursed. And as another text observes that in '*the multitude of counsellors there is safety*,' which I think may mean safety to the counsellors as well as to the counselled, because if they commit a fault in counselling the blame does not fall upon one or a few, but is divided among many, and the share of each is so much the lighter, or because when a number of honest men are concerned the suspicion of their being biassed is weaker, as being more improbable, or because *defendit numerus;* for all these reasons, but especially for the support your established character of integrity would afford me against the attacks of enemies, if this treaty take place, and I am to act in it, I wish for your presence, and the presence of as many of the commissioners as possible, and I hope you will reconsider and change your resolution.

In the meantime, as you have had opportunities of conversing with the new ministers and other leading people in England, and of learning their sentiments relating to terms of peace, etc., I request you would inform me by letters of what you think important. Letters from you will come safer by the

court courier than by the post, and I desire you would, if you should continue determined not to act, communicate to me your ideas of the terms to be insisted on, and the points to be attended to, respecting commerce, fisheries, boundaries, and every other material circumstance that may be of importance to all or any of the United States.

Lord Shelburne having written to me on the subject of the wished-for peace, I acquainted him in my answer, sent by our friend, Mr. Oswald, that you were one of the commissioners appointed by Congress to treat with Britain, and that I imagined his Lordship would therefore think proper to discharge you entirely from the obligations you entered into when you were admitted to bail that you might be at liberty to act freely in the commission. He wrote to me in reply that you were accordingly discharged immediately. His Lordship mentioned nothing of any exchange being expected for you; nevertheless, I honor your sensibility on the point, and your concern for the credit of America, that she should not be outdone in generosity by Great Britain, and will cheerfully join with you in any act that you may think proper, to discharge in return the parole of Lord Cornwallis, as far as in our power may lie; but we have no express authority for that purpose, and the Congress may possibly, in the meantime, have made some other arrangement relative to his exchange. I conceive that our acts should contain a clause reserving to Congress the final approbation or disallowance of the proceeding; and I have some doubt whether Lord Cornwallis will think himself

well freed of his engagements, and at liberty to exercise his military employments by virtue of any concession in his favor made by persons who are not vested with authority for that purpose. So that, on the whole, perhaps the best and surest way will be our writing immediately to Congress and strongly recommending the measure. However, I will do what you shall think best.

I heartily wish you success in any endeavors you may use in Holland for raising a loan of money. We have pressed rather too hard on this court, and we still want more than they can conveniently spare us; but I am sorry that too scrupulous regard to our wants and difficulties should induce you, under the present infirmity of your lower limbs, to deny yourself the necessary comfort of an easy carriage, rather than make any use of the public assistance, when the public must be much in your debt. I beg you would get over that difficulty, and take of me what you may have occasion for.

The letter you forwarded to me was from America's constant friend, the good Bishop of St. Asaph. He speaks of you in terms of the highest esteem and respect.

Mr. Oswald has gone back again to London, but intended to return again immediately. Mr. Grenville remains here, and has received power to treat, but no further steps can be taken till Spain and Holland have empowered ministers for the same purpose.

I shall inform you and Mr. Adams (if he does not come) of the proceeding from time to time, and re-

quest your counsel in cases of any difficulty. I hope you will not think of hazarding a return to America before a peace, if we find any hopes of its being soon obtained; and that, if you do not find you can be useful in the manner you wish, in Holland, you will make me happy by your company and counsel here. With great and sincere esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

May 26th, I received the following from Mr. Hartley:

"London, 13 May, 1782.

"My Dear Friend:—I wrote you a long letter dated May 1st,[1] by Mr. Laurens, who left London on Saturday last, but I will add a few lines now by a conveyance, which I believe will overtake him, just to tell you two or three things which I believe I omitted in my last. Perhaps they may not be of any consequence, but, as they relate to my own conduct, I could wish to have you understand them.

"After several conferences with the late ministry, I gave in the paper, called the *Breviate*,[2] on the 7th of February, but I never received any answer from them. They resigned on the 20th March. Upon the accession of the new ministry, I heard nothing from them upon the subject, nor indeed did I apply to them. I did not know whether that paper would not come into their hands by succession, and I doubted whether it might not be more proper for me to wait till I heard from them. While I remained doubtful about this, I received your letters,

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 343.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 351.

which determined me to go to Lord Shelburne. This was about the beginning of the present month. I communicated to him some extracts, such as those about the prisoners, etc., and likewise the whole of your letter of April 13th, containing the offer of the late ministry, the king of France's answer, together with your reflections in the conclusion respecting peace. As you had given me a general permission, I left him a copy of the whole letter.

"Upon the occasion of this interview, Lord Shelburne told me that he had made much inquiry in the offices for the correspondence and papers which had passed between the late ministry and me, but that he could not meet with them. He expressed a regret that he had not conversed with me at an earlier day, with many civilities of that kind. In short, I had been backward to intrude myself, and he expressed regret that he had not sent for me.

"Upon this opening on his part, I stated to him the substance of what passed between the late ministry and myself, and I left a copy of the *Breviate* with him. He gave me a very attentive audience, and I took that opportunity of stating my sentiments to him, as far as I could, upon every view of the question. Upon his expressing his regret that he had not seen me sooner, I told him that I always had been, and always should be, most ready to give any assistance in my power towards the work of peace. I say the same to you.

"I do not believe that there is any difference of sentiment between you and me, *personally*, in our own minds upon independence, etc., etc. But we belong

to different communities, and the right of judgment, and of consent and dissent, is vested in the community. Divide independence into six millions of shares, and you should have been heartily *welcome* to *my* share from the beginning of the war. Divide Canada into six millions of shares, I could find a better method of disposing of *my* share, than by offering it to France to abandon America. Divide the Rock of Gibraltar into six million of pieces, I can only answer for one portion. Let Reason and Justice decide in any such case, as universal umpires between contending parties, and those who wish well to the permanent peace of mankind will not refuse to give and to receive equal justice.

"I agree with you, that the equitable and philosophical principles of politics can alone form a solid foundation of permanent peace; and the contraries to them, though highly patronized by nations themselves, and their ministers, are no better than vulgar errors; but nations are slow to convictions from the personal arguments of individuals. They are 'jealous in honor, seeking the *bubble reputation* even in the cannon's mouth.' But until a confirmed millennium, founded upon wiser principles, shall be generally established, the *reputation* of nations is not merely a *bubble*. It forms their real security.

"To apply all this in one word, let all nations agree with one accord to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, or give me wooden walls to Great Britain! I have nothing further to add. My reason for writing this was just to communicate to you in what position I

had delivered over my conferences and arguments with the late ministry into the hands of the present. And I will conclude with your own words, may God send us all more wisdom. I am ever, most affectionately, yours, etc.,

"D. HARTLEY.

"P. S.—*May 17th.* Since writing the above, I have likewise left a copy of the enclosed preliminaries with Lord Shelburne:

"May 7, 1782.

"1. That the British troops shall be withdrawn from the Thirteen Provinces of North America, and a truce made between Great Britain and the said Provinces, for years. (Suppose ten or twenty years.)

"2. That a negotiation for peace shall *bonâ fide* be opened between Great Britain and the allies of America.

"3. If the proposed negotiation between Great Britain and the allies of America should not succeed so far as as to produce peace, but that war should continue between the said parties, that America should act and be treated as a neutral nation.

"4. That whenever peace shall take place between Great Britain and the allies of America, the truce between Great Britain and America shall be converted into a perpetual peace, the independence of America shall be admitted and guaranteed by Great Britain, and a commercial treaty settled between them.

"5. That these propositions shall be made to the

court of France for communication to the American commissioners and for an answer to the court of Great Britain."

The same day Mr. Grenville visited me. He acquainted me that his courier was returned, and had brought him full powers in form to treat for a peace *with France and her allies*. That he had been at Versailles, and had shown his power to M. de Vergennes, and left a copy with him. That he had also a letter of credence, which he was not to deliver till France should think fit to send a minister of the same kind to London; that M. de Vergennes had told him that he would lay it before the king and had desired to see him again on Wednesday. That Mr. Oswald had arrived in London about an hour before the courier came away. That Mr. Fox in his letter had charged him to thank me for that which I had written, and to tell me that he hoped I would never forget that he and I were of the same country.

I answered that I should always esteem it an honor to be owned as a countryman of Mr. Fox. He had requested me, at our last interview, that, if I saw no impropriety in doing it, I would favor him with a sight of the treaty of alliance between France and America. I acquainted him that it was printed, but that if he could not readily meet with a copy I would have one written for him. And as he had not been able to find one, I this day gave it to him.

He lent me a London gazette containing Admiral Rodney's account of his victory over M. de Grasse, and the accounts of other successes in the East

Indies, assuring me, however, that these events made not the least change in the sincere desire of his court to treat for peace.

In the afternoon the Marquis de Lafayette called upon me. I acquainted him with what Mr. Grenville had told me respecting the credential letter and the expectation that a person on the part of this court would be sent to London with a commission similar to his. The Marquis told me he was on his way to Versailles and should see M. de Vergennes. We concluded that it would now be proper for him to make the proposition we had before talked of, that he should be the person employed in that service.

On Monday the 27th I received a letter from Mr. Jay, dated the 8th, acquainting me that he had received mine of the 21st and 22d past, and had concluded to set out for Paris about the 19th, so that he may be expected in a few days.

I dined this day with Count d'Estaing and a number of brave marine officers that he had invited. We were all a little dejected with the news. I mentioned, by way of encouragement, the observation of the Turkish bashaw, who was taken with his fleet at Lepanto by the Venetians. "Ships," says he, "are like my master's beard; you may cut it, but it will grow again. He has cut off from your government all the Morea, which is like a limb, which you will never recover." And his words proved true.

On Tuesday I dined at Versailles with some friends, so was not at home when the Marquis de Lafayette called to acquaint me that M. de Vergennes informed

him that the full power received by Mr. Grenville from London and communicated by him, related to France only. The Marquis left for me this information, which I could not understand. On Wednesday I was at court and saw the copy of the power. It appeared full with regard to treating with France, but mentioned not a word of her allies. And, as M. de Vergennes had explicitly and constantly from the beginning declared to the several messengers, Mr. Forth, Mr. Oswald, and Mr. Grenville, that France could only treat in concert with her allies, and it had in consequence been declared on the part of the British ministry that they consented to treat for a general peace, and at Paris, the sending this partial power seemed to be insidious, and a mere invention to occasion delay, the late disasters to the French fleet having probably given the court of England fresh courage and other views.

M. de Vergennes said he should see Mr. Grenville on Thursday, and would speak his mind to him on the subject very plainly. "They want," said he, "to treat with us for you, but this the king will not agree to. He thinks it not consistent with the dignity of your state. You will treat for yourselves; and every one of the powers at war with England will make its own treaty. All that is necessary for our common security is that the treaties go hand in hand, and are signed all on the same day."

Prince Bariatinski, the Russian ambassador, was particularly civil to me this day at court, apologized for what passed relating to the visit, expressed himself extremely sensible of my friendship in covering

the affair, which might have occasioned him very disagreeable consequences, etc. The Count du Nord came to M. de Vergennes, while we were drinking coffee, after dinner. He appears lively and active, with a sensible, spirited countenance. There was an opera that night for his entertainment. The house being richly finished with abundance of carving and gilding, well illuminated with wax tapers, and the company all superbly dressed, many of the men in cloth of tissue, and the ladies sparkling with diamonds, formed altogether the most splendid spectacle my eyes ever beheld.

I had some little conference to-day with Messrs. Berkenrode, Vanderpierre, and Boeris, the ambassador of Holland, and the agents of the Dutch East India Company. They informed me that the second letter of Mr. Fox to the mediating minister of Russia, proposing a separate peace with Holland, made no more impression than the first, and no peace would be made but in concurrence with France.

The Swedish minister told me he expected orders from his court relative to a treaty, etc.

I had, at our last interview, given Mr. Grenville a rendezvous for Saturday morning, and, having some other engagements for Thursday and Friday, though I wished to speak to him on the subject of his power, I did not go to him, but waited his coming to me on Saturday. On Friday, May 31st, Mr. Oswald called on me, being just returned, and brought me the following letter from David Hartley, and two letters from Lord Shelburne, the first of which had been written before his arrival:

"London, 25 May, 1782.

"My Dear Friend:—Yours of the 13th instant I received by Mr. Oswald. I did not doubt but that the news of a general and absolute release of the American prisoners, which Lord Shelburne was so good as to communicate to me, in answer to that part of your letter of the 5th of April, in which you speak so pathetically of *sweet reconciliation*, would give you much sincere and heartfelt pleasure. God send, that it may be the happy omen of final *reconciliation* and *durable peace*. I should be very happy to hear that good news from you, and in any way to contribute to it. Having on that subject communicated the preliminaries, dated May, 1782, to Lord Shelburne, you may be assured that I have no reservations upon that head respecting America, in any circumstances or condition whatever. You know all my thoughts upon that subject, and the principles upon which they are founded, and, therefore, that they are not changeable.

"It would give me the greatest pleasure if I could hope for any opportunity of seeing you. I could say many things which are otherwise incommunicable, and which, perhaps, would contribute to facilitate the road to peace. I think I see in many parts much matter to work with, out of which a peace, honorable to all parties, and upon durable principles, might be established. *No degrading or mortifying conditions to shorten peace and rekindle war.* Perhaps I might not say too much if I were to add that simply the adoption of *reason* among nations and the mere rectification of obsolete and

gothic absurdities, which carry no gratification, would afford a fund of remuneration to all parties for renouncing those objects of mutual contention, which, *in the eye of reason*, are no better than creatures of passion, jealousy, and false pride. Until the principles of *reason* and equity shall be adopted in national transactions, peace will not be durable amongst men.

"These are reflections general to all nations. As to the mutual concerns between Great Britain and North America, *reconciliation* is the touchstone to prove those hearts which are without alloy. If I can be of any assistance to you in any communications or explanations conducive to peace, you may command my utmost services. Even if a French minister were to overhear such an offer, let him not take it in jealous part. Zealously and affectionately attached to my own country and to America, I am nevertheless most perfectly in accord with you, that justice and honor should be observed towards all nations. Mr. Oswald will do me the favor to convey this to you. I heartily wish him success in his pacific embassy. Yours ever, most affectionately,

"D. HARTLEY."

"WHITEHALL, 21 May, 1782.

"SIR:—I am honored with your letter of the 10th instant, and am very glad to find that the conduct which the king has empowered me to observe towards Mr. Laurens and the American prisoners has given you pleasure. I have signified to Mr. Oswald his Majesty's pleasure, that he shall continue at Paris

till he receives orders from hence to return. In the present state of this business, there is nothing for me to add but my sincere wishes for a happy issue, and to repeat my assurances that nothing shall be wanting on my part which can contribute to it. I have the honor to be, with very great regard,

"SHELBURNE." [1]

[1] As the Earl of Shelburne was the principal minister concerned in negotiating the peace, and as it was a very important event in his official life, he retained among his private papers a copy of the entire correspondence between the ministry and Mr. Oswald, the British commissioner in Paris during the whole of the negotiation. This valuable collection is now in the possession of the Marquis of Lansdown, by whose courtesy and liberality I was favored with a complete transcript of it while I was pursuing my researches for materials relating to American history in the public offices of London; with permission to make such use of any parts of the correspondence as would conduce to historical truth, or help to explain the transactions to which it relates. In Mr. Oswald's letters he gives copious accounts of his conversations with Dr. Franklin and the other commissioners on the subject of the treaty; from which the views of the parties and their modes of proceeding are more or less clearly ascertained. These letters bear so directly on many points in Dr. Franklin's correspondence while the negotiation was in progress, that I shall add in the notes a few extracts from them as occasions may offer, premising the above statement merely for the reader's information as to their origin and authenticity.

From the Earl of Shelburne to Richard Oswald.—"I am sorry to observe that the French minister gives very little reason to expect that his court is likely to make good their professions which they made through so many channels, of a desire of peace upon terms becoming this country to accept, upon the strength of which Dr. Franklin invited the present negotiation. I have that entire confidence in Dr. Franklin's integrity and strict honor, that if the court of France have other views, and that they have been throwing out false lures to support the appearance of moderation throughout Europe, and in the hope of misleading and the chance of dividing us, I am satisfied that he must have been himself deceived; and in such a case I trust that if this shall be proved in the course of the present negotiation, he will consider himself and his constituents freed from the tie which will appear to have been founded upon no ideas of common interest.

"We shall, however, I hope, speedily ascertain the real purposes of

"WHITEHALL, 25 May, 1782.

"SIR:—I have the honor to receive your letter of the 13th of May by Mr. Oswald. It gives me great pleasure to find my opinion of the moderation, prudence, and judgment of that gentleman confirmed by your concurrence. For I am glad to assure you that we likewise concur in hoping that those qualities may enable him to contribute to the speedy conclusion of a peace, and such a peace as may be firm and long lasting. In that hope he has the king's orders to return immediately to Paris, and you will find him, I trust, properly instructed to co-operate in so desirable an object. I have the honor to be, etc.,

"SHELBURNE."

I had not then time to converse much with Mr. Oswald, and he promised to come and breakfast with me on Monday.

Saturday, June 1st.—Mr. Grenville came, according to appointment. Our conversation began by my acquainting him that I had seen the Count de Vergennes, and had perused the copy left with him of the power to treat; that after what he, Mr. Grenville, told me of its being to treat with France *and her allies*, I was a little surprised to find in it no mention of the allies, and that it was only to treat with the

France by their conduct in the future progress of this negotiation, which the king will not suffer to go into any length. In the meantime you will govern your conversation with the American commissioners with all possible prudence, collecting your sentiments, and every other information which you may conceive may hereafter prove useful; and I have his Majesty's commands to acquaint you that it is his pleasure you should continue at Paris till you receive his orders to return, of which you will acquaint Dr. Franklin and Count de Vergennes."—*Whitehall, May 21st, MS. Letter.* SPARKS.

king of France and his ministers; that, at Versailles, there was some suspicion of its being intended to occasion delay, the professed desire of a speedy peace being, perhaps, abated in the British court since its late successes; but that I imagined the words relating to the allies might have been accidentally omitted in transcribing, or that perhaps he had a special power to treat with us distinct from the other.

He answered that the copy was right, and that he had no such power in form, but that his instructions were full to that purpose, and that he was sure the ministers had no desire of delay, nor any of excluding us from the treaty, since the greatest part of those instructions related to treating with me. That to convince me of this sincerity of his court respecting us, he would acquaint me with one of his instructions, though perhaps the doing it now was premature, and, therefore, a little inconsistent with the character of a politician, but he had that confidence in me that he should not hesitate to inform me (though he wished that at present it should go no further), *he was instructed to acknowledge the independence of America, previous to the commencement of the treaty.* And he said he could only account for the omission of America in the POWER by supposing that it was an old official form copied from that given to Mr. Stanley, when he came over hither before the last peace. Mr. Grenville added that he had, immediately after his interview with the Count de Vergennes, despatched a courier to London, and hoped that with his return the difficulty would be removed.

That he was perfectly assured their late success had made no change in the disposition of his court to peace, and that he had more reason than the Count de Vergennes to complain of delays, since five days were spent before he could obtain a passport for his courier, and then it was not to go and return by way of Calais, but to go by Ostend, which would occasion a delay of five days longer. Mr. Grenville then spoke much of the high opinion the present ministry had of me, and their great esteem for me, their desire of a perfect reconciliation between the two countries, and the firm and general belief in England that no man was so capable as myself of proposing the proper means of bringing about such a reconciliation, adding that, if the old ministers had formerly been too little attentive to my counsels, the present were very differently disposed, and he hoped that in treating with them I would totally forget their predecessors.

The time has been when such flattering language, as from great men, might have made me vainer, and had more effect on my conduct than it can at present, when I find myself so near the end of life as to esteem lightly all personal interests and concerns, except that of maintaining to the last and leaving behind me the tolerably good character I have hitherto supported.

Mr. Grenville then discoursed of our resolution not to treat without our allies. "This," says he, "can only properly relate to France, with whom you have a treaty of alliance, but you have none with Spain, you have none with Holland. If Spain and

Holland, and even if France should insist on unreasonable terms of advantage to themselves, after you have obtained all you want and are satisfied, can it be right that America should be dragged on in a war for their interest only?" He stated this matter in various lights and pressed it earnestly.

I resolved from various reasons to evade the discussion, therefore answered that the intended treaty not being yet begun, it appeared unnecessary to enter at present into considerations of that kind. The preliminaries being once settled and the treaty commenced, if any of the other powers should make extravagant demands on England, and insist on our continuing the war till those were complied with, it would then be time enough to consider what our obligations were and how far they extended. The first thing necessary was for him to procure the full powers, the next for us to assemble the plenipotentiaries of all the belligerent parties, and then propositions might be mutually made, received, considered, answered, or agreed to. In the meantime I would just mention to him that though we were yet under no obligations to Spain by treaty, we were under obligations of gratitude for the assistance she had afforded us; and as Mr. Adams had some weeks since commenced a treaty in Holland, the terms of which I was not yet acquainted with, I knew not but that we might have already some alliance and obligations contracted there. And perhaps we ought, however, to have some consideration for Holland on this account, that it was in vengeance for the friendly disposition shown by some of her people

to make a treaty of commerce with us, that England had declared the war against her.

He said it would be hard upon England if, having given reasonable satisfaction to one or two of her enemies, she could not have peace with those till she had complied with whatever the others might demand, however unreasonable, for so she might be obliged to pay for every article fourfold. I observed that when she made her propositions, the more advantageous they were to each, the more it would be the interest of each to prevail with the others to accept those offered to them. We then spoke of the reconciliation, but his full power not being yet come, I chose to defer entering upon that subject at present. I told him I had thoughts of putting down in writing the particulars that I judged would conduce to that end, and of adding my reasons, that this required a little time and I had been hindered by accidents, which was true, for I had begun to write but had postponed it on account of his defective power to treat. But I promised to finish it as soon as possible. He pressed me earnestly to do it, saying an expression of mine in a former conversation, that there still remained *roots of good-will* in America towards England, which if properly taken care of might produce a reconciliation, had made a great impression on his mind and given him infinite pleasure, and he hoped I would not neglect furnishing him with the information of what would be necessary to nourish those *roots*, and could assure me that my advice would be greatly regarded.

Mr. Grenville had shown me at our last interview a letter from the Duke of Richmond to him, requesting him to prevail with me to disengage a Captain McLeod of the artillery from his parole, the Duke's brother, Lord George Lenox, being appointed to the command of Portsmouth, and desiring to have him as his aide-de-camp. I had promised to consider it, and this morning I sent him the following letter:

PASSY, 31 May, 1782.

SIR:—I do not find that I have any express authority to absolve a parole given by an English officer in America, but desirous of complying with a request of the Duke of Richmond as far as may be in my power, and being confident that the Congress will be pleased with whatever may oblige a personage they so much respect, I do hereby consent that Captain McLeod serve in his military capacity in England only, till the pleasure of the Congress is known, to whom I will write immediately, and who, I make no doubt, will discharge him entirely. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

America had been constantly befriended in Parliament by the Duke of Richmond, and I believed the Congress would not be displeased that this opportunity was taken of obliging him, and that they would by their approbation supply the deficiency of my power. Besides, I could not well refuse it, after what had passed between Mr. Laurens and me, and what I had promised to do for that gentleman.

Sunday, June 2d.—The Marquis de Lafayette

called and dined with me. He is uneasy about the delay, as he cannot resolve concerning his voyage to America till some certainty appears of there being a treaty or no treaty. This day I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams:

PASSY, 2 June, 1782.

SIR:—Since mine of May 8th I have not had any thing material to communicate to your Excellency. Mr. Grenville indeed arrived just after I had despatched that letter, and I introduced him to M. de Vergennes, but, as his mission seemed only a repetition of that by Mr. Oswald, the same declaration of the king of England's sincere desire of peace, and willingness to treat at Paris, which were answered by the same declarations of the good dispositions of this court, and that it could not treat without the concurrence of its allies, I omitted writing till something should be produced from a kind of agreement, that M. de Vergennes would acquaint Spain and Holland with the overture, and Mr. Grenville would write for full powers to treat and make propositions; nothing of importance being in the meantime to be transacted.

Mr. Grenville accordingly despatched a messenger for London, who returned in about twelve days. Mr. Grenville called on me, after having been at Versailles, and acquainted me that he had received the power, and had left a copy of it with M. de Vergennes, and that he was thereby authorized to treat with France and her *allies*. The next time I went to Versailles I desired to see that copy, and was surprised to find in it no mention of the allies of France,

or any one of them, and, on speaking with M. de Vergennes about it, I found he began to look upon the whole as a piece of artifice to amuse us and gain time; since he had uniformly declared to every agent who had appeared there, viz., to Forth, Oswald, and Grenville, that the king would not treat without the concurrence of his allies, and yet England had given a power to treat with France only, which showed she did not intend to treat at all, but meant to continue the war.

I had not till yesterday an opportunity of talking with Mr. Grenville on the subject, and expressing my wonder that, after what he told me, there should be no mention made of our States in his commission; he could not explain this to my satisfaction, but said he believed the omission was occasioned by their copying an old commission given to Mr. Stanley at the last treaty of peace, for he was sure the intention was that he should treat with us, his instructions being fully to that purpose. I acquainted him that I thought a special commission was necessary, without which we could not treat with him. I imagine that there is a reluctance in their king to take this first step, as the giving such a commission would itself be a kind of acknowledgment of our independence. Their late success against Count de Grasse may also have given them hopes that, by delay and more successes, they may make that acknowledgment and a peace less necessary.

Mr. Grenville has written to his court for further instructions. We shall see what the return of his courier will produce. If full power to treat with each

of the powers at war against England does not appear, I imagine the negotiation will be broken off. Mr. Grenville, in his conversation with me, insists much on our being under no engagements not to make a peace without Holland. I have answered him that I know not but that you may have entered into some, and if there should be none, a general pacification, made at the same time, would be best for us all, and that I believe neither Holland nor we could be prevailed on to abandon our friends. What happens further shall be immediately communicated.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mr. Laurens, to whom I wrote some days since. Mr. Jay, I suppose, is on his way hither. With great respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

On Monday the 3d, Mr. Oswald came according to appointment. He told me, he had seen and had conversations with Lord Shelburne, Lord Rockingham, and Mr. Fox. That their desire of peace continued uniformly the same, though he thought some of them were a little too much elated with the late victory in the West Indies; and when, observing his coolness, they asked him if he did not think it a very good thing: "Yes," said he, "if you do not rate it too high." He went on with the utmost frankness to tell me that the peace was absolutely necessary for them. That the nation had been foolishly involved in four wars, and could no longer raise money to carry them on, so that if they continued, it would be absolutely necessary for them

to stop payment of the interest money on the funds, which would ruin their future credit. He spoke of stopping on all sums above one thousand pounds, and continuing to pay on those below, because the great sums belonged to the rich, who could better bear the delay of their interest, and the smaller sums to poorer persons, who would be more hurt and make more clamor, and that the rich might be quieted by promising them interest upon their interest. All this looked as if the matter had been seriously thought on.

Mr. Oswald has an air of great simplicity and honesty, yet I could hardly take this to be merely a weak confession of their deplorable state, and thought it might be rather intended as a kind of intimidation, by showing us that they had still that resource in their power, which he said would furnish five millions a year. But, he added, our enemies may now do what they please with us; *they have the ball at their foot*, was his expression, and we hope they will show their moderation and magnanimity. He then repeatedly mentioned the great esteem the ministers had for me, that they, with all the considerate people of England, looked to and depended on me for the means of extricating the nation from its present desperate situation; and that, perhaps, no single man had ever in his hands an opportunity of doing so much good as I had at this present time, with much more to that purpose. He then showed me a letter to him from Lord Shelburne, partly, I suppose, that I might see his Lordship's opinion of me, which, as it has some relation to the negotiation,

is here inserted. He left it with me, requesting that I would communicate it to Mr. Walpole:

FROM THE EARL OF SHELBURNE TO RICHARD OSWALD

"WHITEHALL, 21 May, 1782.

"SIR:—It has reached me that Mr. Walpole esteems himself much injured by your going to Paris, and that he conceives it was a measure of mine, intended to take the present negotiation with the court of France out of his hands, which he conceives to have been previously commenced through his channel, by Mr. Fox. I must desire that you will have the goodness to call upon Mr. Walpole, and explain to him distinctly how very little foundation there is for so unjust a suspicion, as I knew of no such intercourse. Mr. Fox declares he considered what had passed between him and Mr. Walpole of a mere private nature, not sufficiently material to mention to the king or the cabinet, and will write to Mr. Walpole to explain this distinctly to him.

"But if you find the least suspicion of this kind has reached Dr. Franklin, or the Count de Vergennes, I desire this matter may be clearly explained to both. I have too much friendship for Dr. Franklin, and too much respect for the character of the Count de Vergennes, with which I am perfectly acquainted, to be so indifferent to the good opinion of either, as to suffer them to believe me capable of an intrigue, where I have both professed and observed a direct opposite course of conduct. In truth, I hold it in such perfect contempt that, however proud I may be to serve the king in my present

situation, or in any other, and however anxious I may be to serve my country, I should not hesitate a moment about retiring from any situation which required such services. But I must do the king the justice to say that his Majesty abhors them, and I need not tell you that it is my fixed principle that no country in any moment can be advantaged by them. I am, with great truth and regard, etc.,

"SHELBURNE."

In speaking further of the ministry's opinion of the great service it might be in my power to render, Mr. Oswald said he had told them, in one of his conversations, that nothing was to be expected of me but consistency, nothing unsuitable to my character, or inconsistent with my duty to my country. I did not ask him the particular occasion of his saying this, but thought it looked a little as if something inconsistent with my duty had been talked of or proposed. Mr. Oswald also gave me a copy of a paper of memorandums, written by Lord Shelburne, viz.:

"1. That I am ready to correspond more particularly with Dr. Franklin, if wished.

"2. That the *Enabling Act* is passing, with the insertion of commissioners recommended by Mr. Oswald; and, on our part, commissioners will be named, or any character given to Mr. Oswald which Dr. Franklin and he may judge conducive to a final settlement of things between Great Britain and America, which Dr. Franklin very properly says requires to be treated in a very different manner

from the peace between Great Britain and France, who have always been at enmity with each other.

"3. That an establishment for the loyalists must always be on Mr. Oswald's mind, as it is uppermost in Lord Shelburne's, besides other steps in their favor to influence the several States to agree to a fair restoration or compensation for whatever confiscations have taken place.

"4. To give Lord Shelburne's letter about Mr. Walpole to Dr. Franklin."

On perusing this paper, I recollected that a bill had been some time since proposed in Parliament, *To enable his Majesty to conclude a Peace or Truce with the revolted Provinces in America*, which I supposed to be the *Enabling Bill* mentioned, that had hitherto slept, and not having been passed, was perhaps the true reason why the colonies were not mentioned in Mr. Grenville's commission. Mr. Oswald thought it likely, and said that the words "insertion of commissioners recommended by Mr. Oswald" related to his advising an express mention in the bill of the commissioners appointed by Congress to treat of peace, instead of the vague denomination of *any person or persons, etc.*, in the first draft of the bill.

As to the loyalists, I repeated what I had said to him when first here, that their estates had been confiscated by the laws made in particular States where the delinquents had resided, and not by any law of Congress, who indeed had no power either to make such laws or to repeal them, or to dispense with them, and therefore could give no power to their

commissioners to treat of a restoration for those people; that it was an affair appertaining to each State. That if there were justice in compensating them, it must be due from England rather than America; but in my opinion England was not under any very great obligations to them, since it was by their misrepresentations and bad counsels she had been drawn into this miserable war. And that if an account was to be brought against us for their losses, we should more than balance it by an account of the ravages they had committed all along the coasts of America.

Mr. Oswald agreed to the reasonableness of all this, and said he had, before he came away, told the ministers that he thought no recompense to those people was to be expected from us; that he had also, in consequence of our former conversation on that subject, given it as his opinion that Canada should be given up to the United States, as it would prevent the occasions of future difference, and as the government of such a country was worth nothing and of no importance if they could have there a free commerce; that the Marquis of Rockingham and Lord Shelburne, though they spoke reservedly, did not seem very averse to it, but that Mr. Fox appeared to be startled at the proposition. He was, however, not without hopes that it would be agreed to.

We now came to another article of the note, viz., "On our part commissioners will be named, or any character given to Mr. Oswald which Dr. Franklin and he may judge conducive to a final settlement of things between Great Britain and America."

This, he said, was left entirely to me, for he had no will in the affair; he did not desire to be further concerned than to see it *in train;* he had no personal views either of honor or profit. He had now seen and conversed with Mr. Grenville, thought him a very sensible young gentleman, and very capable of the business; he did not, therefore, see any further occasion there was for himself, but if I thought otherwise, and conceived he might be further useful, he was content to give his time and service, in any character or manner I should think proper. I said his knowledge of America, where he had lived, and with every part of which, and of its commerce and circumstances, he was well acquainted, made me think that in persuading the ministry to things reasonable relating to that country, he could speak or write with more weight than Mr. Grenville, and therefore I wished him to continue in the service, and I asked him whether he would like to be joined in a general commission for treating with all the powers at war with England, or to have a special commission to himself for treating with America only. He said he did not choose to be concerned in treaty with the foreign powers, for he was not sufficiently a master of their affairs or of the French language, which probably would be used in treating; if therefore he accepted of any commission, it should be that of treating with America. I told him I would write to Lord Shelburne on the subject, but Mr. Grenville having some time since despatched a courier, partly on account of the commission, who was not yet returned, I thought it well to wait a few

days till we could see what answer he would bring or what measures were taken. This he approved of.

The truth is he appears so good and so reasonable a man that, though I have no objection to Mr. Grenville, I should be loth to lose Mr. Oswald. He seems to have nothing at heart but the good of mankind, and putting a stop to mischief; the other, a young statesman, may be supposed to have naturally a little ambition of recommending himself as an able negotiator.

In the afternoon, M. Boeris, of Holland, called on me and acquainted me that the answer had not yet been given to the last memorial from Russia, relating to the mediation; but it was thought that it would be in respectful terms to thank her Imperial Majesty for her kind offers, and to represent the propriety of their connection with France in endeavors to obtain a general peace, and that they conceived it would be still more glorious for her Majesty to employ her influence in procuring a general, than a particular pacification. M. Boeris further informed me that they were not well satisfied in Holland with the conduct of the Russian court, and suspected views of continuing the war for particular purposes.

Tuesday, June 4th.—I have received another packet from Mr. Hartley. It consisted of duplicates of former letters and papers already inserted, and contained nothing new but the following letter from Colonel Hartley, his brother:

"Soho Square, 24 May, 1782.

"Dear Sir:—It is with the greatest pleasure I take up my pen to acknowledge your remembrance

of me in yours to my brother, and to thank you for those expressions of regard which I can assure you are mutual. My brother has desired me to copy some letters and papers, by way of sending you duplicates. I am particularly happy at the employment, because the greatest object of my parliamentary life has been to co-operate with him in his endeavors to put a period to this destructive war, and forward the blessed work of peace. I hope to see him again in that situation, where he can so well serve his country with credit to himself; and while I have the honor of being in Parliament, my attention will be continued to promote the effects which will naturally flow from those principles of freedom and universal philanthropy you have both so much supported. While I copy his words, my own feelings and judgment are truly in unison, and I have but to add the most ardent wish that peace and happiness may crown the honest endeavors towards so desirable an end. I am, dear sir, with the greatest respect and esteem, yours sincerely,

"W. H. Hartley."

Wednesday, June 5th.—Mr. Oswald called again to acquaint me that Lord Cornwallis, being very anxious to be discharged from his parole as soon as possible, had sent a Major Ross hither to solicit it, supposing Mr. Laurens might be here with me. Mr. Oswald told me, what I had not heard before, that Mr. Laurens, while prisoner in the Tower, had proposed obtaining the discharge of Lord Cornwallis in exchange for himself, and had promised to use his utmost

endeavors to that purpose, in case he was set at liberty, not doubting of the success. I communicated to Mr. Oswald what had already passed between Mr. Laurens and me, respecting Lord Cornwallis, which appears in the preceding letters; and told him I should have made less difficulty about the discharge of his parole if Mr. Laurens had informed me of his being set at liberty in consequence of such an offer and promise; and I wished him to state this in a letter to me, that it might appear for my justification in what I might, with Mr. Laurens, do in the affair, and that he would procure for me from Major Ross a copy of the parole, that I might be better acquainted with the nature of it. He accordingly in the afternoon sent me the following letter:

"PARIS, 5 June, 1782.

"SIR:—While Mr. Laurens was under confinement in England, he promised that, on condition of his being liberated upon his parole, he would apply to you for an exchange in favor of Lord Cornwallis, by a discharge of his Lordship's granted upon the surrender of his garrison at the village of York in Virginia; and, in case of your being under any difficulty in making such exchange, he undertook to write to the Congress, and to request it of that assembly, making no doubt of obtaining a favorable answer, without loss of time.

"This proposal, signed by Mr. Laurens' hand, I carried and delivered, I think in the month of December last, to his Majesty's then secretaries of state, which was duly attended to, and in consequence thereof Mr. Laurens was soon after set at full liberty.

And though not a prisoner under parole, yet it is to be hoped a variation in the mode of discharge will not be supposed of any essential difference.

"And with respect to Mr. Laurens, I am satisfied he will consider himself as much interested in the success of this application, as if his own discharge had been obtained under the form, as proposed by the representation, which I delivered to the secretaries of state, and, I make no doubt, will sincerely join my Lord Cornwallis in an acknowledgment of your favor and good offices in granting his Lordship a full discharge of his parole above mentioned. I have the honor to be, with much respect, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

"Richard Oswald."

"P. S.—Major Ross has got no copy of Lord Cornwallis' parole. He says it was in the common form, as in like cases.

"Since writing the above, I recollect I was under a mistake, as if the proposal of exchange came first from Mr. Laurens; whereas it was made by his Majesty's secretaries of state to me that Mr. Laurens should endeavor to procure the exchange of Lord Cornwallis, so as to be discharged himself. Which proposal I carried to Mr. Laurens, and had from him the obligation above mentioned, upon which the mode of his discharge was settled. R. O."

To this I made the following answer:

Passy, 6 June, 1782.

Sir:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me respecting the parole of Lord Corn-

wallis. You are acquainted with what I wrote some time since to Mr. Laurens. To-morrow is post day from Holland, when possibly I may receive an answer with a paper drawn up by him for the purpose of discharging that parole, to be signed by us jointly. I suppose the staying at Paris another day will not be very inconvenient to Major Ross; and if I do not hear to-morrow from Mr. Laurens, I will immediately, in compliance with your request, do what I can towards the liberation of Lord Cornwallis. I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

B. Franklin.

Friday, June 7th.—Major Ross called upon me to thank me for the favorable intentions I had expressed in my letter to Mr. Oswald, respecting Lord Cornwallis, and to assure me that his Lordship would for ever remember it with gratitude, etc. I told him it was our duty to alleviate, as much as we could, the calamities of war; that I expected letters from Mr. Laurens relating to the affair, after the receipt of which I would immediately complete it; or, if I did not hear from Mr. Laurens, I would speak to the Marquis de Lafayette, get his approbation, and finish it without further delay.

Saturday, June 8th.—I received some newspapers from England, in one of which is the following paragraph:

From the London Evening Post, of May 30, 1782.

"If report on the spot speak truth, Mr. Grenville, in his first visit to Dr. Franklin, gained a considerable

point of information as to the powers America had retained for treating *separately* with Great Britain, in case her claims or demands were granted.

"The treaty of February 6, 1778, was made the basis of this conversation; and by the spirit and meaning of this treaty, there is no obligation on America not to treat separately for peace, after she is assured England will grant her independence and a free commerce with all the world.

"The first article of that treaty engages America and France to be bound to each other as long as *circumstances* may require; therefore, the granting America all she asks of England is breaking the bond by which the *circumstances* may bind America to France.

"The second article says, the meaning and direct end of the alliance is to insure the freedom and independence of America. Surely, then, when freedom and independence are allowed by Britain, America may or may not, as she chooses, put an end to the present war between England and America, and leave France to war on through all her mad projects of reducing the power and greatness of England, while America feels herself possessed of what she wishes.

"By the eighth article of the treaty, neither France nor America can conclude peace without the assent of the other; and they engage not to lay down their arms until the independence of America is acknowledged; but this article does not exclude America from entering into a separate treaty for peace with England, and evinces more strongly than the former

articles, that America may enter into a separate treaty with England when she is convinced that England has insured to her *all that she can reasonably ask*."

I conjecture that this must be an extract from a letter of Mr. Grenville's; but it carries an appearance as if he and I had agreed, in these imaginary discourses, of America's being at liberty to make peace without France, and whereas my whole discourse, in the strongest terms, declared our determinations to the contrary, and the impossibility of our acting, not only contrary to the treaty, but the duties of gratitude and honor, of which nothing is mentioned. This young negotiator seems to value himself on having obtained from me a copy of the treaty. I gave it to him freely at his request, it being not so much a secret as he imagined, having been printed, first in all the American papers soon after it was made, then at London in Almon's *Remembrancer*, which I wonder he did not know; and afterwards in a collection of the American *Constitutions*, published by order of Congress. As such imperfect accounts of our conversations find their way into the English papers, I must speak to this gentleman of its impropriety.[1]

[1] In relation to some of these topics, Mr. Oswald wrote as follows to the Earl of Shelburne:

"I have nothing of business to trouble your Lordship with, only that upon one occasion, since my last arrival, Dr. Franklin said they (the Americans) had been totally left out in Mr. Grenville's powers, as they extended only to treating with the minister of France. I told him the deficiency would, no doubt, be supplied in due time, as might be supposed, since, in the meanwhile, they had been assured by Mr.

Sunday, June 9th.—Dr. Bancroft being intimately acquainted with Mr. Walpole, I this day gave him Lord Shelburne's letter to Mr. Oswald, requesting he would communicate it to that gentleman. Dr. Bancroft said it was believed both Russia and the Emperor wish the continuance of the war, and aimed at procuring for England a peace with Holland, that England might be better able to continue it against France and Spain.

The Marquis de Lafayette having proposed to call on me to-day, I kept back the discharge of Lord Cornwallis, which was written and ready, desiring to have his approbation of it, as he had in a former conversation advised it. He did not come, but late in

Grenville, that his Majesty had agreed to *grant independence in the first instance*. The Doctor said it was true, and he was glad of it, and supposed that was all that could be done, until the act depending in Parliament was passed.

"He then talked of treaties, and said, he thought the best way to come to a general peace was to treat separately with each party, and under distinct commissions to one and the same, or different persons.

"By this method, he said, many difficulties, which must arise in discussing a variety of subjects, not strictly relative to each other, under the same commission, and to which all the several parties are called, would be in a great measure avoided. And then at last there will only remain to consolidate those several settlements into one general and conclusive treaty of pacification; which, upon inquiry, I found he understood to be the indispensable mode of final accommodation.

"However material that part of the question might be, regarding the possibility of an equitable coalescence of so many different propositions and settlements, there was no explanation as to the extent of their relative dependence on each other. And I did not think it proper to ask for it. He only explained, as to the commissions, that there might be one to treat with France, one for the Colonies, one for Spain, and, he added, one for Holland, if it should be thought proper. Mr. Grenville being very well with the Doctor, he has, no doubt, mentioned the same things to him; yet I thought it my duty to communicate to him the substance of this conversation."—*Paris, June 9th, MS. Letter.*

the evening sent me a note, acquainting me that he had been prevented, by accompanying the Great Duke to the review, but would breakfast with me to-morrow morning.

This day I received a letter from Mr. Dana, dated at St. Petersburg, April 29th, in which is the following passage: "We yesterday received the news that the States-General had, on the 19th of this month, (N. S.), acknowledged the independence of the United States. This event gave a shock here, and is not well received, as they at least profess to have flattered themselves that the mediation would have prevented it, and otherwise brought on a partial peace between Britain and Holland. This resentment, I believe, will not be productive of any ill consequences to the Dutch republic." It is true that while the war continues Russia feels a greater demand for the naval stores, and perhaps at a higher price. But is it possible that for such petty interests mankind can wish to see their neighbors destroy each other? Or has the project, lately talked of, some foundation, that Russia and the Emperor intend driving the Turks out of Europe, and do they therefore wish to see France and England so weakened as to be unable to assist those people?

Monday, June 10th.—The Marquis de Lafayette did not come till between eleven and twelve. He brought with him Major Ross. After breakfast he told me (Major Ross being gone into another room) that he had seen Mr. Grenville lately, who asked him when he should go to America; that he had answered: "I have stayed here longer than I should

otherwise have done, that I might see whether we were to have peace or war; but as I see that the expectation of peace is a joke, and that you only amuse us without any real intention of treating, I think to stay no longer, but set out in a few days." On which Mr. Grenville assured him that it was no joke; that they were very sincere in their proposal of treating, and four or five days would convince the Marquis of it.

The Marquis then spoke to me about a request of Major Ross' in behalf of himself, Lord Chewton, a lieutenant-colonel, and Lieutenant Haldane, who were aides-de-camp to Lord Cornwallis, that they too might be set at liberty with him. I told the Marquis that he was better acquainted with the custom in such cases than I, and being himself one of the generals to whom their parole had been given, he had more right to discharge it than I had, and that if he judged it a thing proper to be done, I wished him to do it. He went into the bureau, saying he would write something, which he accordingly did; but it was not, as I expected, a discharge that he was to sign; it was for me to sign. And the Major, not liking that which I had drawn for Lord Cornwallis, because there was a clause in it, reserving to Congress the approbation or disallowance of my act, went away without taking it. Upon which I the next morning wrote the following to Mr. Oswald:

Passy, 11 June, 1782.

Sir:—I did intend to have waited on you this morning to inquire after your health, and deliver the

enclosed paper relating to the parole of Lord Cornwallis, but being obliged to go to Versailles, I must postpone my visit till to-morrow.

I do not conceive that I have any authority in virtue of my office here, to absolve that parole in any degree; I have therefore endeavored to found it as well as I could on the express power given me by Congress to exchange General Burgoyne for Mr. Laurens. A reservation is made of confirmation or disapprobation by Congress, not from any desire to restrain the entire liberty of that general, but because I think it decent and my duty to make such reservation, and that I might otherwise be blamed as assuming a power not given me if I undertook to discharge absolutely a parole given to Congress without any authority from them for so doing. With great esteem and respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

I have received no answer from Mr. Laurens. The following is the paper mentioned in the above letter:

The Discharge of Lord Cornwallis from his Parole

The Congress having, by a resolution of the 14th of June last, empowered me to offer an exchange of General Burgoyne for the Honorable Henry Laurens, then a prisoner in the Tower of London, and whose liberty they much desire to obtain, which exchange, though proposed by me, according to the said resolution, had not been accepted or executed when advice was received that General Burgoyne

was exchanged in virtue of another agreement, and Mr. Laurens thereupon having proposed another lieutenant-general, viz., Lord Cornwallis, as an exchange for himself, promising that if set at liberty he would do his utmost to obtain a confirmation of that proposal, and Mr. Laurens being soon after discharged, and having since urged me earnestly in several letters to join with him in absolving the parole of that general, which appears to be a thing just and equitable in itself, and for the honor therefore of our country, I do hereby, as far as in my power lies, in virtue of the above resolution, or otherwise, absolve and discharge the parole of Lord Cornwallis, given by him in Virginia; setting him at entire liberty to act in his civil or military capacity until the pleasure of Congress shall be known, to whom is reserved the confirmation or disapprobation of this discharge, in case they have made, or shall intend to make, a different disposition.

Given at Passy, this 9th day of June, 1782.

B. Franklin,
Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to the Court of France

I did not well comprehend the Major's conduct in refusing this paper. He was come express from London to solicit the discharge of Lord Cornwallis' parole. He had said that his Lordship was very anxious to obtain that discharge, being unhappy in his present situation. One of his objections to it was that his Lordship, with such a limited discharge of his parole, could not enter into foreign service.

He declared it was not his Lordship's intention to return to America. Yet he would not accept the paper unless the reservation was omitted. I did not choose to make the alteration, and so he left it, not well pleased with me.

This day, *Tuesday, June 11th*, I was at Versailles, and had a good deal of conversation with M. de Rayneval, Secretary to the Council. I showed him the letters I had received by Mr. Oswald from Lord Shelburne, and related all the consequent conversation I had with Mr. Oswald. I related to him also the conversation I had had with Mr. Grenville. We concluded that the reason of his courier's not being returned might be the formalities occasioning delay in passing the *Enabling Bill*.

I went down with him to the cabinet of Count de Vergennes, where all was repeated and explained. That minister seemed now to be almost persuaded that the English court was sincere in its declarations of being desirous of peace. We spoke of all its attempts to separate us, and of the prudence of our holding together and treating in concert. I made one remark that, as they had shown so strong a desire of disuniting us by large offers to each particular power, plainly in the view of dealing more advantageously with the rest, and had reluctantly agreed to make a general treaty, it was possible that, after making a peace with all, they might pick out one of us to make war with separately. Against which project I thought it would not be amiss if before the treaties of peace were signed we who were at war against England should enter into another treaty,

engaging ourselves that in such a case we should again make it a common cause, and renew the general war, which he seemed to approve of. He read Lord Shelburne's letter relating to Mr. Walpole, said that gentleman had attempted to open a negotiation through the Marquis de Castries, who had told him he was come to the wrong house, and should go to Count de Vergennes; but he never had appeared; that he was an intriguer, knew many people about the court, and was accustomed to manage his affairs by hidden and roundabout ways; but, said he: "When people have any thing to propose that relates to my employment, I think they should come directly to me; my cabinet is the place where such affairs are to be treated." On the whole he seemed rather pleased that Mr. Walpole had not come to him, appearing not to like him.

I learned that Mr. Jay had taken leave, on the 7th past, of the Spanish minister, in order to come hither, so that he may be daily expected; but I hear nothing of Mr. Laurens or Mr. Adams.

Wednesday, June 12th.—I visited Mr. Oswald this morning. He said he had received the paper I had sent him, relating to the parole of Lord Cornwallis, and had, by conversing with Major Ross, convinced him of his error in refusing it; but he saw I had done every thing that could be fairly desired of me, and said every thing in the paper that could give a weight to the temporary discharge, and tend to prevail with the Congress to confirm and complete it. Major Ross, coming in, made an apology for not having accepted it at first, declared his perfect satis-

faction with it, and said he was sure Lord Cornwallis would be very sensible of the favor. He then mentioned the custom among military people, that in discharging the parole of a general, that of his aides was discharged at the same time. I answered, I was a stranger to the customs of the army, that I had made the most of the authority I had for exchanging General Burgoyne, by extending it as a foundation for the exchange of Lord Cornwallis, but that I had no shadow of authority for going further; that the Marquis de Lafayette, having been present when the parole was given, and one of the generals who received it, was, I thought, more competent to the discharge of it than myself; and I could do nothing in it. He went then to the Marquis, who, in the afternoon, sent me the drafts of a limited discharge, which he should sign, but requested my approbation of it, of which I made no difficulty, though I observed he had put into it that it was by my advice. He appears very prudently cautious of doing any thing that may seem assuming a power that he is not vested with.

Friday, the 14th.—M. Boeris called again, wishing to know if Mr. Grenville's courier was returned, and whether the treaty was like to go on. I could give him no information. He told me it was intended in Holland, in answer to the last Russian memorial, to say, that they could not now enter into a particular treaty with England, that they thought it more glorious for her Imperial Majesty to be the mediatrix in a general treaty, and wished her to name the place. I said to him: "As you tell me their High

Mightinesses are not well satisfied with Russia, and had rather avoid her mediation, would it not be better to omit the proposition, at least of her naming the place, especially as France, England, and America have already agreed to treat at Paris?" He replied, it might be better; but, says he, "we have no politicians among us." I advised him to write and get that omitted, as I understood it would be a week before the answer was concluded on. He did not seem to think his writing would be of much importance. I have observed that his colleague, M. Vanderpierre, has a greater opinion by far of his own influence and consequence.

Saturday, June 15th.—Mr. Oswald came out to breakfast with me. We afterwards took a walk in the garden, when he told me that Mr. Grenville's courier returned last night. That he had received by him a letter from Mrs. Oswald, but not a line from the ministry, nor had he heard a word from them since his arrival, nor had he heard of any news brought by the courier. That he should have gone to see Mr. Grenville this morning, but he had omitted it, that gentleman being subject to morning headaches, which prevented his rising so early. I said I supposed he would go to Versailles, and call on me in his return. We had but little further discourse, having no new subject.

Mr. Oswald left me about noon, and soon after Mr. Grenville came and acquainted me with the return of his courier, and that he had brought the full powers. That he, Mr. Grenville, had been at Versailles, and left a copy with Count de Vergennes.

That the instrument was in the same terms with the former, except that, after the power to treat with the king of France, or his ministers, there was an addition of words, importing a power to treat with the ministers of any other Prince or *State* whom it might concern. That Count de Vergennes had at first objected to these general words as not being particular enough, but said he would lay it before the king, and communicate it to the ministers of the belligerent powers, and that Mr. Grenville should hear from him on Monday. Mr. Grenville added that he had further informed Count de Vergennes of his being now instructed to make a proposition as a basis for the intended treaty, viz., the peace of 1763; that the proposition intended to be made under his first powers, not being then received, was now changed, and instead of proposing to allow the independence of America on condition of England's being put into the situation she was in at the peace of 1763, he was now authorized to *declare the independence of America previous to the treaty* as a voluntary act, and to propose separately as a basis the treaty of 1763. This also Count de Vergennes undertook to lay before the king, and communicate to me.

Mr. Grenville then said to me he hoped all difficulties were now removed, and that we might proceed in the good work. I asked him if the Enabling Bill was passed. He said, No. It passed the Commons, and had been once read in the House of Lords, but was not yet completed. I remarked that the usual time approached for the prorogation of Parliament, and possibly this business might be omitted.

He said there was no danger of that, the Parliament would not rise this year till the middle of July; the India affairs had put back other business which must be done, and would require a prolongation of the session till that time. I then observed to him that, though we Americans considered ourselves as a distinct independent power, or state, yet, as the British government had always hitherto affected to consider us only as rebellious subjects, and as the Enabling Act was not yet passed, I did not think it could be fairly supposed that his court intended by the general words, *any other Prince or State*, to include a people whom they did not allow to be a state; and that, therefore, I doubted the sufficiency of his power as to treating with America, though it might be good as to Spain and Holland. He replied that he himself had no doubt of the sufficiency of his power, and was willing to act upon it. I then desired to have a copy of the power, which he accordingly promised me.

He would have entered into conversation on the topic of reconciliation, but I chose still to waive it, till I should find the negotiation more certainly commenced; and I showed him the London paper containing the article above transcribed, that he might see how our conversations were misrepresented, and how hazardous it must be for me to make any propositions of the kind at present. He seemed to treat the newspapers lightly, as of no consequence; but I observed that, before he had finished the reading of the article, he turned to the beginning of the paper to see the date, which made me suspect that he

doubted whether it might not have taken its rise from some of his letters.

When he left me, I went to dine with M. de Chaumont, who had invited me to meet there Mr. Walpole, at his request. We shook hands, and he observed that it was near two years since we had seen each other. Then, stepping aside, he thanked me for having communicated to him Lord Shelburne's letter to Mr. Oswald, thought it odd that Mr. Oswald himself had not spoken to him about it; said he had received a letter from Mr. Fox upon the affair of St. Eustatia, in which there were some general words expressing a desire of peace; that he had mentioned this to the Marquis de Castries, who had referred him to Count de Vergennes, but he did not think it a sufficient authority for him to go to that minister. It was known that he had business with the Minister of the Marine, on the other affair, and therefore his going to him was not taken notice of; but, if he had gone to Count de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, it would have occasioned speculation and much discourse; that he had therefore avoided it till he should be authorized, and had written accordingly to Mr. Fox; but that in the meantime, Mr. Oswald had been chosen upon the supposition that he, Mr. Walpole, and I were at variance. He spoke of Mr. Oswald as an odd kind of man, but that, indeed, his nation were generally odd people, etc. We dined pleasantly together with the family, and parted agreeably, without entering into any particulars of the business. Count d'Estaing was at this dinner, and I met him again in the evening at Madame

Brillon's. There is at present among the people much censure of Count de Grasse's conduct, and a general wish that Count d'Estaing had the command in America. I avoid meddling or even speaking on the subject, as improper for me, though I much esteem that commander.

Sunday, the 16th.—I heard nothing from Versailles. I received a letter from Mr. Adams, acquainting me he had drawn upon me for a quarter's salary, which he hoped would be the last, as he now found himself in the way of getting some money there, though not much. But he says not a word in answer to my late letters on public affairs, nor have I any line from Mr. Laurens, which I wonder at. I received also a letter from Mr. Carmichael, dated June 5th, at Madrid. He speaks of Mr. Jay being on his journey, and supposes he would be with me before that letter, so that I may expect him daily. We have taken lodgings for him in Paris.

Monday, the 17th.—I received a letter from Mr. Hodgson, acquainting me that the American prisoners at Portsmouth, to the number of three hundred, were all embarked on board the transports, that each had received twenty shillings' worth of necessaries at the expense of government, and went on board in good humor; that contrary winds had prevented the transports arriving in time at Plymouth, but that the whole number there now of our people, amounting to seven hundred, with those arrived from Ireland, would soon be on their way home.

In the evening the Marquis de Lafayette came to

see me, and said he had seen Count de Vergennes, who was satisfied with Mr. Grenville's powers. He asked me what I thought of them, and I told him what I had said to Mr. Grenville of their imperfection with respect to us. He agreed in opinion with me. I let him know that I proposed waiting on Count de Vergennes to-morrow.

He said he had signed the paper relating to Major Ross' parole, and hoped Congress would not take it amiss, and added that, in conversation with the Major, he had asked him why England was so backward to make propositions. "We are afraid," says the Major, "of offering you more than you expect or desire." I find myself in some perplexity with regard to these two negotiators. Mr. Oswald appears to have been the choice of Lord Shelburne, Mr. Grenville that of Mr. Secretary Fox. Lord Shelburne is said to have lately acquired much of the king's confidence. Mr. Fox calls himself the minister of the people, and it is certain that his popularity is lately much increased. Lord Shelburne seems to wish to have the management of the treaty; Mr. Fox seems to think it in his department. I hear that the understanding between these ministers is not quite perfect. Mr. Grenville is clever, and seems to feel reason as readily as Mr. Oswald, though not so ready to own it. Mr. Oswald appears quite plain and sincere; I sometimes a little doubt Mr. Grenville. Mr. Oswald, an old man, seems now to have no desire but that of being useful in doing good. Mr. Grenville, a young man, naturally desirous of acquiring reputation, seems to aim

at that of being an able negotiator. Mr. Oswald does not solicit to have any share in the business, but, submitting the matter to Lord Shelburne and me, expresses only his willingness to serve, if we think he may be useful, and is equally willing to be excused, if we judge there is no occasion for him. Mr. Grenville seems to think the whole negotiation committed to him, and to have no idea of Mr. Oswald's being concerned in it, and is therefore willing to extend the expressions in his commission, so as to make them comprehend America, and this beyond what I think they will bear. I imagine we might, however, go on very well with either of them, though I should rather prefer Oswald; but I apprehend difficulties if they are both employed, especially if there is any misunderstanding between their principals. I must, however, write to Lord Shelburne, proposing something in consequence of his offer of vesting Mr. Oswald with any commission which that gentleman and I should think proper.

Tuesday, the 18th.—I found myself much indisposed with a sudden and violent cold, attended with a feverishness and headache. I imagined it to be an effect of the influenza, a disorder now reigning in various parts of Europe. This prevented my going to Versailles.

Thursday, the 20th.—Weather excessively hot, and my disorder continues, but is lessened, the headache having left me. I am, however, not yet able to go to Versailles.

Friday, the 21st.—I received the following note from the Marquis de Lafayette:

"Versailles, Thursday morning, 20 June, 1782.

"My Dear Sir:—Agreeably to your desire, I have waited upon the Count de Vergennes, and said to him what I had in command from your Excellency. He intends taking the king's orders this morning, and expects he will be able to propose to Mr. Grenville a meeting for to-morrow, when he will have time to explain himself respecting France and her allies, that he may make an official communication both to the king and the allied ministers. What Count de Vergennes can make out of this conversation will be communicated by him to your Excellency, in case you are able to come. In the other case I shall wait upon you to-morrow evening with every information I can collect. I have the honor to be, very respectfully, etc., "Lafayette."

In the evening the Marquis called upon me, and acquainted me that Mr. Grenville had been with Count de Vergennes, but could not inform me what had passed.

Saturday, the 22d.—Messrs. Oswald and Whitefoord came and breakfasted with me. Mr. Oswald had received no letters or instructions. I told him I would write to Lord Shelburne respecting him, and call on him on Monday morning to breakfast, and show him what I proposed to write, that it might receive such alterations as he should judge proper.

Sunday, the 23d.—In the afternoon Mr. Jay arrived, to my great satisfaction. I proposed going with him next morning to Versailles, and presenting him to M. de Vergennes. He informed me that the

Spanish ministers had been much struck with the news from England respecting the resolutions of Parliament to discontinue the war in America, etc., and that they had since been extremely civil to him, and he understood intended to send instructions to their ambassador at this court to make the long-talked-of treaty with him here.

Monday, the 24th.—Wrote a note of excuse to Mr. Oswald, promising to see him on Wednesday, and went with Mr. Jay to Versailles. Count de Vergennes acquainted us that he had given to Mr. Grenville the answer to his propositions, who had immediately despatched it to his court. He read it to us, and I shall endeavor to obtain a copy of it. Count de Vergennes informing us that a frigate was about to be despatched for America, by which we might write, and that the courier who was to carry down the despatches would set out on Wednesday morning, we concluded to omit coming to court on Tuesday, in order to prepare our letters. Count de Vergennes appeared to have some doubts about the sincerity of the British court and the *bonne foi* of Mr. Grenville, but said the return of Mr. Grenville's courier might give light. I wrote the following letters to Mr. Secretary Livingston and Mr. Morris.

Passy, 25 June, 1782.

Sir:—I have received your respective letters of January 26th [1] and February 13th. The first was accompanied with a form of a convention for the establishment of consuls. Mr. Barclay having been detained these six months in Holland, though in

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 294.

continual expectation of returning hither, I have yet done nothing in that business, thinking his presence might be of use in settling it. As soon as he arrives I shall move the completion of it.

The second enforces some resolutions of Congress sent me with it, respecting a loan of twelve millions of livres to be demanded of France for the current year. I have already received the promise of six millions, together with the clearest and most positive assurances that it was all the king could spare to us, that we must not expect more, that if drafts and demands came upon me beyond that sum it behoved me to take care how I accepted them, or where I should find funds for the payment, since I could certainly not be further assisted out of the royal treasury. Under this declaration, with what face could I ask for another six millions? It would be saying you are not to be believed, you can spare more; you are able to lend me twice the sum if you were but willing. If you read my letter to Mr. Morris of this date, I think you will be convinced how improper any language, capable of such a construction, would be to such a friend. I hope, however, that the loan Mr. Adams has opened in Holland for three millions of florins, which it is said is likely to succeed, will supply the deficiency.

By the newspapers I have sent, you will see that the general disposition of the British nation towards us had been changed. Two persons have been sent here by the new ministers to propose treating for peace. They had at first some hopes of getting the belligerent powers to treat separately, one after

another, but finding that impracticable, they have, after several messengers sent to and fro, come to a resolution of treating with all together for a general peace, and have agreed that the place shall be Paris. Mr. Grenville is now here with full powers for that purpose (if they can be reckoned full with regard to America till a certain act is completed for enabling his Majesty to treat, etc., which has gone through the Commons, and has been once read in the House of Lords). I keep a very particular journal of what passes every day in the affair, which is transcribing to be sent to you. I shall therefore need to say no more about it in this letter except that though I still think they were sincere at first in their desire of peace, yet since their success in the West Indies I imagine that I see marks of their desiring rather to draw the negotiations into length, that they may take the chance of what the campaign shall produce in their favor; and as there are so many interests to adjust, it will be prudent for us to suppose that even another campaign may pass before all can be agreed. Something, too, may happen to break off the negotiations, and we should be prepared for the worst.

I hoped for the assistance of Mr. Adams and Mr. Laurens. The first is too much engaged in Holland to come hither, and the other declines serving; but I have now the satisfaction of being joined by Mr. Jay, who happily arrived here from Madrid last Sunday. The Marquis de Lafayette is of great use in our affairs here, and as the campaign is not likely to be very active in North America, I wish I may be able to prevail with him to stay a few weeks longer.

By him you will receive the journal above mentioned, which is already pretty voluminous, and yet the negotiations cannot be said to be opened.

Ireland, you will see has obtained all her demands triumphantly. I meet no one from that country who does not express some obligations to America for their success.

Before I received your just observations on the subject, I had obtained from the English ministers a resolution to exchange all our prisoners. They thought themselves obliged to have an act of Parliament about it for authorizing the king to do it, this war being different from others, as made by an act of Parliament declaring us rebels, and our people being committed for high treason. I empowered Mr. Hodgson, who was chairman of the committee that collected and dispensed the charitable subscriptions for the American prisoners, to treat and conclude on the terms of their discharge; and, having approved of the draft he sent me of the agreement, I hope Congress will see fit to order a punctual execution of it. I have long suffered with those poor brave men, who with so much public virtue have endured four or five years' hard imprisonment, rather than serve against their country. I have done all I could afford towards making their situation more comfortable; but their numbers were so great that I could do but little for each, and that very great villain, Digges, defrauded them of between three and four hundred pounds, which he drew from me on their account. He lately wrote me a letter, in which he pretended he was coming to settle with

me, and to convince me that I had been mistaken with regard to his conduct; but he never appeared, and I hear he is gone to America. Beware of him, for he is very artful, and has cheated many. I hear every day of new rogueries committed by him in England.

The ambassador from Sweden to this court applied to me lately to know if I had powers that would authorize my making a treaty with his master in behalf of the United States. Recollecting a general power, that was formerly given to me with the other commissioners, I answered in the affirmative. He seemed much pleased, and said the king had directed him to ask the question, and charged him to tell me that he had so great esteem for me that it would be a particular satisfaction to him to have such a transaction with me. I have perhaps some vanity in repeating this; but I think, too, that it is right that Congress should know it, and judge if any use may be made of the reputation of a citizen for the public service. In case it should be thought fit to employ me in that business, it will be well to send a more particular power and proper instructions. The ambassador added that it was a pleasure to him to think, and he hoped it would be remembered, that Sweden was the first power in Europe which had voluntarily offered its friendship to the United States without being solicited. This affair should be talked of as little as possible till completed.

I enclose another complaint from Denmark, which I request you to lay before Congress. I am continually pestered with complaints from French

seamen, who were with Captain Conyngham in his first cruise from Dunkirk; from others who were in the *Lexington*, the *Alliance*, etc., being put on board prizes that were retaken, were never afterwards able to join their respective ships, and so have been deprived of the wages, etc., due to them. It is for our national honor that justice should be done them, if possible; and I wish you to procure an order of Congress for inquiring into their demands, and satisfying such as shall be found just. It may be addressed to the consul.

I enclose a note from M. de Vergennes to me, accompanied by a memoir relating to a Swiss, who died at Edenton. If you can procure the information desired, it will much oblige the French ambassador in Switzerland.

I have made the addition you directed, to the cipher. I rather prefer the old one of Dumas perhaps because I am more used to it. I enclose several letters from that ancient and worthy friend of our country. He is now employed as secretary to Mr. Adams, and I must, from a long experience of his zeal and usefulness, beg leave to recommend him warmly to the consideration of Congress, with regard to his appointments, which have never been equal to his merit. As Mr. Adams writes me the good news, that he shall no longer be obliged to draw on me for his salary, I suppose it will be proper to direct his paying that which shall be allowed to M. Dumas. Be pleased to present my duty to the Congress, and believe me to be, with great esteem and regard,

B. Franklin.

Passy, 25 June, 1782.

Sir:— ——For what relates to war and peace, I must refer you to Mr. Livingston, to whom I write fully. I will only say that, though the English a few months since seemed desirous of peace, I suspect they now intend to draw out the negotiation into length, till they can see what this campaign will produce. I hope our people will not be deceived by fair words, but be on their guard, ready against every attempt that our insidious enemies may make upon us. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

Wednesday, the 26th.—I sent away my letters, and went to see Mr. Oswald. I showed him the draft of a letter to be addressed to him instead of Lord Shelburne, respecting the commission or public character he might hereafter be vested with. This draft was founded on Lord Shelburne's memorandums, which Mr. Oswald had shown to me, and this letter was intended to be communicated by him to Lord Shelburne. Mr. Oswald liked the mode, but rather chose that no mention should be made of his having shown me Lord Shelburne's memorandums, though he thought they were given to him for that purpose. So I struck that part out, and new modelled the letter, which I sent him the next day, as follows:

Passy, 27 June, 1782.

Sir:—The opinion I have of your candor, probity, and good understanding, and good-will to both countries, made me hope you would have been vested with the character of plenipotentiary to treat with those from America. When Mr. Grenville produced his

first commission, which was only to treat with France, I did imagine that the other to treat with us was reserved for you, and kept only till the Enabling Bill should be passed. Mr. Grenville has since received a second commission, which, as he informs me, has additional words, empowering him to treat with the ministers of any other *Prince* or *State* whom it may concern; and he seems to understand that those general words comprehend the United States of America. There may be no doubt that they may comprehend Spain and Holland; but as there exist various public acts by which the government of Britain denies us to be states, and none in which they acknowledge us to be such, it seems hardly clear that we could be intended at the time the commission was given, the Enabling-Act not being then passed. So that, though I can have no objection to Mr. Grenville, nor right to make it, if I had any, yet, as your long residence in America has given you a knowledge of that country, its people, circumstances, commerce, etc., which, added to your experience in business, may be useful to both sides in facilitating and expediting the negotiation, I cannot but hope that it is still intended to vest you with the character above mentioned, respecting the treaty with America, either separately or in conjunction with Mr. Grenville, as to the wisdom of your ministers may seem best. Be it as it may, I beg you would accept this line as a testimony of the sincere esteem and respect with which, etc.,

B. Franklin.[1]

[1] In conformity to Dr. Franklin's suggestion, previously made to Mr. Oswald, the British ministry appointed separate commissions to

Friday, June 28th.—M. de Rayneval called upon me, and acquainted me that the ministers had received intelligence from England that besides the orders given to General Carleton to propose terms of reunion to America, artful emissaries were sent over to go through the country and stir up the people to call on the Congress to accept those terms, they being similar to those settling with Ireland; that it would therefore be well for Mr. Jay and me to write and caution Congress against these practices. He said Count de Vergennes wished also to know what I had written respecting the negotiation, as it would be well for us to hold pretty near the same language. I told him that I did not apprehend the least danger that such emissaries would meet with any success, or

negotiate treaties of peace, as appears by the following extract from a letter written by the Earl of Shelburne to Mr. Oswald:

"I hope to receive early assurances from you, that my confidence in the sincerity and good faith of Dr. Franklin has not been misplaced, and that he will concur with you in endeavoring to render effectual the great work in which our hearts and wishes are so equally interested. You will observe, that we have adopted his idea of the method to come to a general pacification by treating separately with each party. I cannot but entertain a firm reliance that the appointment of the particular commissioners will be no less satisfactory to him. He has very lately warranted me to depend upon that effect in the instance of your nomination, and he will not be surprised at the choice of your colleague, Mr. Jackson, when he considers how very conversant Mr. Jackson is with the subject of America, and how very sincere a friend he has uniformly shown himself to be to the reëstablishment of peace and harmony between that country and this."—*Whitehall, June* 30, 1782. *MS.*

Mr. Richard Jackson, who was associated with Mr. Oswald in the commission, had been long connected with Dr. Franklin in the transaction of Pennsylvania affairs in England and is often mentioned in the earlier parts of this correspondence. It is uncertain whether he accepted the appointment of commissioner. At any rate, he did not go to Paris, nor take any part in the negotiation.

that the Congress would make any treaty with General Carleton; that I would, however, write as he desired, and Mr. Jay, coming in, promised the same. He said the courier would go to-morrow. I accordingly wrote as follows to Mr. Secretary Livingston and to my friend Dr. Cooper:

Passy, 28 June, 1782.

Sir:—In mine of the 25th instant I omitted mentioning that, at the repeated earnest instances of Mr. Laurens, who had given such expectations to the ministry in England when his parole or securities were discharged, as that he could not think himself at liberty to act in public affairs till the parole of Lord Cornwallis was absolved by me in exchange, I sent to that general the paper, of which the enclosed is a copy, and I see by the English papers that his Lordship, immediately on the receipt of it, appeared at court, and has taken his seat in the House of Peers, which he did not before think was warrantable. My authority for doing this appeared questionable to myself, but Mr. Laurens judged it deducible from that respecting General Burgoyne, and, by his letters to me, seemed so unhappy till it was done, that I ventured it, with a clause, however, as you will see, reserving to Congress the approbation or disallowance of it.

The Enabling Act is now said to be passed, but no copy of it is yet received here, so that as the bill first printed has suffered alterations in passing through Parliament, and we know not what they are, the treaty with us is not yet commenced. Mr. Grenville expects his courier in a few days, with the

answer of his court to a paper given him on the part of this. That answer will probably afford us a clearer understanding of the intentions of the British ministry, which for some weeks past have appeared somewhat equivocal and uncertain. It looks as if, since their late success in the West Indies, they a little repented of the advances they had made in their declarations respecting the acknowledgment of our independence, and we have pretty good information that some of the ministers still flatter the king with the hope of recovering his sovereignty over us on the same terms as are now making with Ireland. However willing we might have been at the commencement of this contest to have accepted such conditions, be assured we can have no safety in them at present. The king hates us most cordially. If he is once admitted to any degree of power and government among us, however limited, it will soon be extended by corruption, artifice, and force, till we are reduced to absolute subjection, and that the more easily as by receiving him again for our king, we shall draw upon us the contempt of all Europe, who now admire and respect us, and shall never again find a friend to assist us.

There are, it is said, great divisions in the ministry on other points as well as this, and those who aim at engrossing the power, flatter the king with this project of reunion, and it is said have much reliance on the operations of private agents sent into America to dispose minds there in favor of it, and to bring about a separate treaty there with General Carleton. I have not the least apprehension that

Congress will give in to this scheme, it being inconsistent with our treaties, as well as with our interest, but I think it will be well to watch the emissaries, and secure, or banish immediately, such as shall be found tampering and stirring up the people to call for it.

The firm, united resolution of France, Spain, and Holland, joined with ours, not to treat of a particular, but a general peace, notwithstanding the separate tempting offers to each, will in the end give us the command of that peace. Every one of the other powers sees clearly its interest in this, and persists in that resolution. The Congress, I am persuaded, are as clear-sighted as any of them, and will not depart from the system which has been attended with so much success, and promises to make America soon both great and happy.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Laurens, dated at Lyons, on his journey into the south of France for his health. Mr. Jay will write also by this opportunity. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

Passy, June, 1782.

—— Our public affairs are in a good situation here. England, having tried in vain to make a separate peace with each of the powers she is at war with, has at length agreed to treat for a general peace with them all together; and at Paris. If we all continue firm in the resolution not to separate, we shall command the terms. I have no doubt of this steadiness here; and though we are told that endeavors are making on your side the water to

induce America to a reunion on the terms now granting to Ireland, and that powers are sent to General Carleton for that purpose, I am persuaded the danger of this project will appear so evident that, if offered, it will be immediately rejected. We have no safety but in our independence; with that we shall be respected, and soon become great and happy. Without it we shall be despised, lose all our friends, and then either be cruelly oppressed by the king, who hates, and is incapable of forgiving us, or, having all that nation's enemies for ours, shall sink with it. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

M. de Rayneval, who is Secretary to the Council of State, called again in the evening. I gave him copies of the three preceding letters to peruse and show to Count de Vergennes, to convince him that we held no underhand dealing here. I own I had, at the same time, another view in it, which was, that they should see I had been ordered to demand further aids, and had forborne to make the demands, with my reasons, hoping that if they could possibly help us to more money, they might be induced to do it.

I had never made any visit to Count d'Aranda, the Spanish ambassador, for reasons before mentioned. M. de Rayneval told Mr. Jay and me this morning that it would be well for us to wait on him, and he had authority to assure us we should be well received. We accordingly concluded to wait on his Excellency the next morning.

Saturday, June 29th.—We went together to the Spanish ambassador's, who received us with great civility and politeness. He spoke with Mr. Jay on the subject of the treaty they were to make together, and mentioned in general, as a principle, that the two powers should consider each other's conveniency, and accommodate and compensate each other as well as they could. That an exact compensation might perhaps not be possible, but should be approached as nearly as the nature of things would admit. "Thus," says he, "if there is a certain thing which would be convenient to each of us, but more convenient to one than to the other, it should be given to the one to whom it would be most convenient, and compensation made by giving another thing to the other, for the same reason." I suppose he had in view something relating to boundaries or territories, because, he added, we will sit down together with maps in our hands, and, by that means, shall see our way more clearly. I learned from him that the expedition against Providence had sailed, but no advice was yet received of its success. On our going out, he took pains himself to open the folding-doors for us, which is a high compliment here; and told us he would return our visit, *rendre son devoir*, and then fix a day with us for dining with him. I dined with Mr. Jay and a company of Americans at his lodgings.

Sunday, June 30th.—M. Grenville called on me.

Dr. Franklin's Journal closes abruptly here. To make it a satisfactory record of the negotiations as

they broadened and deepened in their course, no doubt he found it required more time and consideration than he could well spare, or perhaps he thought it was worth, as the substance of what was done was necessarily reduced to writing in the correspondence of the parties to the negotiation.—EDITOR.

MLXXXVI

TO HENRY LAURENS

PASSY, 2 July, 1782.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me from Lyons the 24th past.

I wonder a little at Mr. —— not acquainting you whether your name was in the commission or not. I begin to suspect, from various circumstances, that the British ministry, elated perhaps too much by the success of Admiral Rodney, are not in earnest to treat immediately, but rather wish delay. They seem to hope that further successes may enable them to treat more advantageously; or, as some suppose, that certain propositions to be made to Congress by General Carleton may render a treaty here with us unnecessary. A little bad news, which it is possible they may yet receive from the same quarter, will contribute to set them right; and then we may enter seriously upon the treaty; otherwise I conjecture it may not take place till after another campaign. Mr. Jay is arrived here. Mr. Grenville and Mr. Oswald continue here. Mr. Oswald has yet received

no commission; and that of Mr. Grenville does not very clearly comprehend us, according to British ideas; therefore it requires explication. When I know more you shall have further information.[1]

[1] *From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.*—"I beg leave under this cover to transmit to your Lordship a letter directed to myself from Dr. Franklin, which he sent to me on the 27th of June, the day it is dated; and I will also take notice of what passed between him and me in consequence of it.

"I have kept it in my hands until now, to go by the return of the first courier that arrives, which Mr. Grenville has been expecting daily, but as none had appeared, and thinking the Doctor could have no meaning in putting such a letter into my hands, but with a view to its being forwarded to your Lordship, and might perhaps be disappointed or disobliged if delayed, I thought it right to let him know that it was not sent, and the reason of its still remaining in my hands on that account; and wishing to have an opportunity of talking to him on the subject of it, I went to his house on Saturday the 6th instant, and stayed with him about an hour.

"After thanking him for his good opinion of me, as expressed in that letter, and giving the reason for its not being forwarded, I told him that this interval of delay had given occasion to sundry questions in my own mind as to the business we should have to treat about, in case I should be appointed and should undertake the office he was pleased to recommend in that letter. With France and the other parties, I was sensible there must be many points to be settled. But with respect to the colonies, I told him I could not easily conceive how there could arise any variety of subject to treat upon; that, as to a final conclusion, the treaty with France might make it necessary to wait the event of a determination as to them, so as both might be included in one settlement; but until then I could not see there would be much field for negotiation between Great Britain and the commissioners of the colonies after their independence had been granted; and which, being in a manner acknowledged, I had been in hopes there remained no questions of either side that would require much discussion. If he thought it would be otherwise, I told him I would be much obliged to him to give me a hint of them, as the questions could not but be material to me in considering whether I might venture upon such a charge. That this I would request of him as a friend, and I hoped I might also expect of him as a friend to England, which I must still suppose him to be; and in which I was not singular, believing it was the universal opinion at home, and particularly with regard to your lordship, who, I had reason to be assured, had the greatest confidence

Not having an immediate answer to what I wrote you concerning the absolution of Lord Cornwallis' in his good intentions towards our country. That I did not just then desire or expect an answer, but if he would name any other day, I should wait on him in hopes of having his opinion and advice upon the particular subject of this colony treaty, and his sentiments in general upon the whole of these affairs, which I was certain would be of service in guiding us how to proceed in the safest and quickest course to a final conclusion of this unhappy business.

"That I had too just a notion of his character to expect any information but such as would not be inconsistent with particular engagements. But where that did not interfere, his granting the favor I asked might be doing a good office to all parties concerned; for I could not help thinking that the commissioners of the colonies had it much in their power to give despatch to the general treaty, and to end it on just and reasonable terms, even notwithstanding their particular treaty with France. Upon this, the Doctor said they had no treaty with France but what was published. I said I was glad it was so, since I saw nothing there, however guarded, against a separate peace, that should direct or control the conditions of a treaty between them and Great Britain, excepting the provision for the great article of independence, which was now out of the question.

"That whatever advice or hints (regarding that purpose) the Doctor would be pleased to give me, I would make no indiscreet use of, but would pledge my honor that they should be strictly kept under such directions of communication as he should think fit to prescribe.

"After allowing me to go on in this way, he said there were some things which he wished England to think of, or to agree to (I forget which), and yet he should not like that they were known to have been suggested by him. At last he told me if I would come out to his house on Wednesday the 10th, he would show me a minute of some things which he thought might be deserving of notice upon the occasion. If we agreed in opinion it was so far well; if not, that I should let him know, and he would be glad to have my opinion; and where we agreed I might make use of his sentiments as my own to any good purpose I might think proper.

"I forgot to mention that I told the Doctor that I would write to your Lordship by the first courier for leave to return for some time to England, and wished he might give me something to carry that might be acceptable to your Lordship. I shall be better able to judge after I have seen him on Wednesday. He again mentioned Canada, and said there would be no solid peace while it remained an English colony." —*Paris, July 8th. MS. Letter.*

Two days afterwards Mr. Oswald wrote another long despatch to the

parole, and Major Ross coming hither from him to press it, I gave him the discharge you desired.

Earl of Shelburne, detailing his conversations with Dr. Franklin. Such extracts are given below as contain the chief points of these conversations. They are remarkable as showing *that all the prominent articles of the treaty, as it was finally agreed to and ratified, were proposed and insisted on by him before Mr. Oswald had seen either of the other American commissioners.*

From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.—"In consequence of Dr. Franklin's appointment, as mentioned in my letter of the 8th under this cover, I went out to his house this morning and stayed with him near two hours, with a view of obtaining the information and advice I wished for, as to the terms and conditions upon which he thought the treaty between Great Britain and the commissioners of the colonies might be carrying on, and proceed to a conclusion. Having reminded him of what he in a manner promised on the 6th, he took out a minute and read from it a few hints or articles; some, he said, as *necessary* for them to insist on; others, which he could not say he had any orders about, or were not absolutely demanded, and yet such as it would be *advisable* for England to offer for the sake of reconciliation and her future interest, viz.:

"1st. Of the first class, *necessary* to be granted; independence, full and complete in every sense, to the Thirteen States; and all troops to be withdrawn from thence.

"2dly. A settlement of the boundaries of *their* colonies and the loyal colonies.

"3dly. A confinement of the boundaries of Canada; at least to what they were before the last act of Parliament, I think in 1774, if not to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing.

"4thly. A freedom of fishing on the Bank of Newfoundland and elsewhere, as well for fish as whales. I own I wondered he should have thought it necessary to ask for this privilege.

"He did not mention the leave of drying fish on shore in Newfoundland, and I said nothing of it. I do not remember any more articles which he said they would insist on, or what he called necessary to them to be granted.

"Then, as to the *advisable* articles, or such as he would, as a friend, recommend to be offered by England, viz.:

"1st. To indemnify many people who had been ruined by towns burnt and destroyed. The whole might not exceed five or six hundred thousand pounds. I was struck at this. However, the Doctor said though this was a large sum it would not be ill bestowed, as it would conciliate the resentment of a multitude of poor sufferers who could

Enclosed I send you a copy. I hear it has proved satisfactory to him; I hope it will be so to you. Believe me to be, with great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

have no other remedy, and who, without some relief, would keep up a spirit of secret revenge and animosity for a long time to come against Great Britain; whereas a voluntary offer of such reparation would diffuse a universal calm and conciliation over the whole country.

"2dly. Some sort of acknowledgment in some public act of parliament, or otherwise, of our error in distressing those countries so much as we had done. A few words of that kind, the Doctor said, would do more good than people could imagine.

"3dly. Colony ships and trade to be received and have the same privileges in Britain and Ireland as British ships and trade. I did not ask any explanation on that head for the present. British and Irish ships in the colonies to be in like manner on the same footing with their own ships.

"4thly. Giving up every part of Canada.

"If there were any other articles of either kind I cannot now recollect them; but I do not think there were any of material consequence, and I perhaps was the less attentive in the enumeration, as it had been agreed to give me the whole in writing. But after some reflection the Doctor said he did not like to give such writing out of his hands; and hesitating a good deal about it, asked me if I had seen Mr. Jay, the other commissioner, lately come from Madrid. I said I had not. He then told me it would be proper I should see him, and he would fix a time for our meeting, and seemed to think he should want to confer with him himself before he gave a final answer. I told him, if I had such final answer, and had leave, I would carry it over to England. He said that would be right, but that as Mr. Grenville told him he expected another courier in four or five days, I had better wait so long, and he would write along with me.

"Upon the whole, the Doctor expresses himself in a friendly way towards England, and was not without hopes that if we should settle on this occasion in the way he wished, England would not only have a beneficial intercourse with the colonies, but at last it might end in a federal union between them. In the meantime we ought to take care not to force them into the hands of other people. He showed me a copy of the *Enabling Bill*, as it is called, and said he observed the word '*revolted*' was left out; and likewise added that the purpose of it was to dispense with acts of Parliament which they were indifferent about, and that now they were better prepared for war, and more able to

MLXXXVII

TO JAMES HUTTON

Passy, 7 July, 1782.

My Old and Dear Friend:—A letter written by you to M. Bertin, *Ministre d Etat*, containing an account of the abominable murders committed by some of the frontier people on the poor Moravian

carry it on than ever they were. That he had heard we entertained some expectation of retaining some sort of sovereignty over them, as his Majesty had of Ireland; and that if we thought so, we should find ourselves much disappointed, for they would yield to nothing of that sort.

"From this conversation I have some hopes, my Lord, that it is possible to put an end to the American quarrel in a short time, and when that is done, I have a notion that the treaty with the other powers will go more smoothly on. The Doctor did not, in the course of the above converstaion, hesitate as to a conclusion with them, on account of any connection with those other states; and in general seemed to think their American affairs must be ended by a separate commission. On these occasions I said I supposed, in case of such a commission, he meant that the power of granting independence would be therein expressly mentioned. He said, 'No doubt.' I hinted this, thinking it better in the power of treating to include independence, than to grant independence separately, and then to treat about other matters with the commissioners of such independent States; who by such grant are on the same footing with ministers of other powers. I did not perceive he made any account of this distinction, and I did not think proper to say any thing more about it.

"I forget one thing the Doctor said with respect to some provision or reparation to those called the loyal sufferers. It would be impossible to make any such provision. They were so numerous, and their cases so various, that he could not see that it could make any part of the treaty. There might be particular cases that deserved compassion. These being left to the several States, they might perhaps do something for them. But they, as commissioners, could do nothing. He then read to me the orders in Carolina for confiscating and selling of estates under the direction of the military, by which so great a number of families had been ruined, and which the people there felt so much as would stifle their compassion for the sufferers on the other side."—*Paris, July 10th, MS. Letter.*

Indians, has given me infinite pain and vexation. The dispensations of Providence in this world puzzle my weak reason; I cannot comprehend why cruel men should have been permitted thus to destroy their fellow-creatures. Some of the Indians may be supposed to have committed sins, but one cannot think the little children had committed any worthy of death. Why has a single man in England, who happens to love blood and to hate Americans, been permitted to gratify that bad temper by hiring German murderers, and, joining them with his own, to destroy in a continued course of bloody years near one hundred thousand human creatures, many of them possessed of useful talents, virtues, and abilities, to which he has no pretension? It is he who has furnished the savages with hatchets and scalping-knives, and engages them to fall upon our defenceless farmers and murder them with their wives and children, paying for their scalps, of which the account kept in America already amounts, as I have heard, to near *two thousand!*

Perhaps the people of the frontiers, exasperated by the cruelties of the Indians, have been induced to kill all Indians that fall into their hands without distinction; so that even these horrid murders of our poor Moravians may be laid to his charge. And yet this man lives, enjoys all the good things this world can afford, and is surrounded by flatterers, who keep even his conscience quiet by telling him he is the best of princes! I wonder at this, but I cannot therefore part with the comfortable belief of a Divine Providence; and the more I see the impossibility,

from the number and extent of his crimes, of giving equivalent punishment to a wicked man in this life, the more I am convinced of a future state, in which all that here appears to be wrong shall be set right, all that is crooked made straight. In this faith let you and me, my dear friend, comfort ourselves; it is the only comfort, in the present dark scene of things, that is allowed us.

I shall not fail to write to the government of America, urging that effectual care may be taken to protect and save the remainder of those unhappy people.

Since writing the above, I have received a Philadelphia paper, containing some account of the same horrid transaction, a little different, and some circumstances alleged as excuses or palliations, but extremely weak and insufficient. I send it to you enclosed. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MLXXXVIII

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE [1]

Passy, 9 July, 1782.

Dear Sir:—Mr. Grenville has been with me in his return from Versailles. He tells me that Lord Rockingham being dead, Lord Shelburne is appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and that Mr.

[1] This is in reply to a note of the same date from Lafayette, informing Franklin of Grenville's arrival and departure for Versailles, and presuming Franklin would see him on his return, asking to be apprised of its results.

Fox has resigned; so that both the secretaryships are vacant; that his communication to Count de Vergennes was only, that no change was thereby made in the dispositions of that court for peace, etc., and he expects another courier with fuller instructions in a few days. As soon as I hear more I shall acquaint you with it. I am ever, with great respect and affection, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MLXXXIX

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 10 July, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor of the 26th past by Mr. Young, and am indebted to you for some preceding. I do not know why the good work of peace goes on so slowly on your side. Some have imagined that your ministers, since Rodney's success, are desirous of trying fortune a little further before they conclude the war; others, that they have not a good understanding with each other. What I have just heard seems to countenance this opinion. It is said Mr. Fox has resigned. We are ready here, on the part of America, to enter into treaty with you in concurrence with our allies, and are disposed to be very reasonable; but, if your *plenipotenitary*, notwithstanding that character, is upon every proposition obliged to send a courier and wait an answer, we shall not soon see the happy conclusion. It has been suspected, too, that you wait to hear the effect

of some overtures sent by General Carleton for a separate peace with America. A vessel just arrived from Maryland brings us the unanimous resolutions of their Assembly, for continuing the war at all hazards, rather than violate their faith with France. This is a sample of the success to be expected from such a measure, if it has really been taken, which I hardly believe.

There is methinks a point that has been too little considered in treaties—the means of making them durable. An honest peasant, from the mountains of Provence, brought me the other day a manuscript he had written on the subject, and which he could not procure permission to print. It appeared to me to have much good sense in it; and therefore I got some copies to be struck off for him to distribute where he may think fit. I send you one enclosed. This man aims at no profit from his pamphlet or his project, asks for nothing, expects nothing, and does not even desire to be known. He has acquired, he tells me, a fortune of near one hundred and fifty crowns a year (about eighteen pounds sterling), with which he is content. This you may imagine would not afford the expense of riding to Paris, so he came on foot; such was his zeal for peace, and the hope of forwarding and securing it, by communicating his ideas to great men here. His rustic and poor appearance has prevented his access to them, or his obtaining their attention; but he does not seem yet to be discouraged. I honor much the character of this *véritable philosophe.*

I thank you much for your letters of May the 1st,

13th, and 25th, with your proposed preliminaries. It is a pleasure to me to find our sentiments so concurring on points of importance; it makes discussions as unnecessary as they might between us be inconvenient. I am, my dear sir, with great esteem and affection yours ever,

B. Franklin.

MXC

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN

Passy, 11 July, 1782.

Dear Sir:—In mine of yesterday, which went by Mr. Young, I made no mention of yours of May 11th, it not being before me. I have just found it.

You speak of a "proposed dependent State of America, which you thought Mr. Oswald would begin with." As yet, I have heard nothing of it. I have all along understood (perhaps I have understood more than was intended), that the point of dependence was given up, and that we are to be treated with as a free people. I am not sure that Mr. Oswald has explicitly said so, but I know that Mr. Grenville has, and that he was to make that declaration previous to the commencement of the treaty. It is now intimated to me from several quarters, that Lord Shelburne's plan is to retain the sovereignty for the king, giving us otherwise an independent Parliament, and a government similar to that of late intended for Ireland. If this be really his project, our negotiation for peace will not go

very far. The thing is impracticable and impossible, being inconsistent with the faith we have pledged, to say nothing of the general disposition of our people. Upon the whole, I should believe that, though Lord Shelburne might formerly have entertained such an idea, he had probably dropped it before he sent Mr. Oswald here; your words above cited do however, throw a little doubt in my mind and have, with the intimations of others, made me less free in communication with his Lordship, whom I much esteem and honor, than I should otherwise have been. I wish therefore, you would afford me what you can of *éclaircissement.*[1]

[1] *From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.*—"I plainly see the Doctor inclines that their business should be done under a separate commission. As to any information I can give in relation to these affairs, which your Lordship recommends to me, I beg leave to say, that, although I had better opportunities of conversation than I have, there is very little to be got here. I will, however, not scruple to give my opinion as things occur to me, namely, that the more anxious we appear for peace, the more backward the people here will be, or the harder in their terms, which is much the same thing; and that, having fully satisfied this court of our desire to put an end to the war, as has been done, the more vigorously our exertions are pushed in the interim, we shall come sooner to our purpose, and on better terms.

"With respect to the commissioners of the colonies, our conduct towards them, I think, ought to be of a style somewhat different. They have shown a desire to treat, and to end with us on a separate footing from the other powers; and, I must say, in a more liberal way, or at least with a greater appearance of feeling for the future interests and connections of Great Britain, than I expected. I speak so from the text of the last conversation I had with Dr. Franklin, as mentioned in my letter of yesterday. And therefore we ought to deal with them tenderly, and as supposed conciliated friends, or at least well disposed to a conciliation, and not as if we had any thing to give them, that we keep from them, or that they are very anxious to have. Even Dr. Franklin himself, as the subject happened to lead that way, as good as told me yesterday, that they were their own masters, and seemed to make no account of the grant of independence as a favor. I was so

This letter, going by a courier, will probably get to hand long before the one preceding in date, which went by Mr. Young, who travels on foot. I therefore enclose the copy of it, which was taken in the press. You may return it to me when the other arrives.

By the return of the courier, you may oblige me by communicating what is fairly communicable of the history of Mr. Fox's and Lord J. Cavendish's resignation, with any other changes made or likely

much satisfied beforehand of their ideas on that head, that I will own to your Lordship I did not read to the Doctor that part of your letter wherein you mentioned that grant as if, in some shape, it challenged a return on their part. When the Doctor pointed at the object of the Enabling Bill, as singly resting on a dispensation of acts of Parliament they cared not for, I thought it enough for me to say they had been binding and acknowledged; to which no answer was made. When the Doctor mentioned the report as if there was an expectation of retaining the sovereignty, I ventured a little further, though with a guarded caution, to touch him on the only tender side of their supposed present emancipation, and said that such a report was possibly owing to the imagination of people, upon hearing of the rejoicing in America, on the cessation of war, change of ministry, etc., which they might conclude would have some effect in dividing the provinces, and giving a different turn to affairs; as no doubt there was a great proportion of these people, notwithstanding all that had happened, who, from considerations of original affinity, correspondence, and other circumstances, were still strongly attached to England. To this also there was no answer made.

"At the same time I cannot but say that I was much pleased upon the whole with what had passed on the occasion of this interview. And I really believe the Doctor sincerely wishes for a speedy settlement, and that, after the loss of dependence, we may lose no more; but, on the contrary, that a cordial reconciliation may take place over all that country.

"Amongst other things I was pleased at his showing me a state of the aids they had received from France, as it looked as if he wanted I should see the amount of their obligations to their ally; and as if it was the only foundation of the ties France had over them, excepting gratitude, which the Doctor owned in so many words. But at the same time he said the debt would be punctually and easily discharged;

to be made. With sincere esteem I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MXCI

TO RICHARD OSWALD

Passy, 12 July, 1782.

Sir:—I enclose a letter for Lord Shelburne, to go by your courier, with some others, of which I request his care. They may be put into the penny post. I have received a note informing me that "some

France having given to 1788 to pay it. The Doctor also particularly took notice of the discharge of the interest to the term of the peace, which he said was kind and generous. It is possible I may make a wrong estimate of the situation of the American business, and of the chance of a total or partial recovery being desperate. In that case my opinion will have no weight, and so will do no hurt; yet in my present sentiments I cannot help offering it, as thinking that circumstances are in that situation that I heartily wish we were done with these people, and as quickly as possible, since we have much to fear from them, in case of their taking the pet, and throwing themselves into more close connections with this court and our other enemies.

"Since writing the above, I am told by a friend who had some conversation with Dr. Franklin this morning, that he (the Doctor) had received a letter from some person in England who is no friend to the late changes, giving among other things an account as if the new administration were not so well disposed to end so quickly and agreeably with the colonies, as those who have left it. This, the gentleman told me, led the Doctor to express himself very strongly as to his desire of quick despatch, as he wanted much to go home, and have the chance of a few years' repose, having but a short time to live in the world, and had also much private business to do.

"I should therefore hope it may be possible soon to bring their business near to a final close, and that they will not be any way stiff as to those articles he called *advisable;* or will drop them altogether. Those he called *necessary* will hardly be any obstacle. I shall be able to make a better guess when I have another meeting with him jointly with Mr. Jay, which I hope to have by the time this courier returns."—*Paris, July 11th. MS. Letter.*

opposition given by his Lordship to Mr. Fox's decided *plan of unequivocally acknowledging America's independence* was one cause of that gentleman's resignation"; this, from what you have told me, appears improbable. It is further said that "Mr. Grenville thinks Mr. Fox's resignation will be fatal to the present negotiation." This, perhaps, is as groundless as the former. Mr. Grenville's next courier will probably clear up matters. I did understand from him that such an acknowledgment was intended previous to the commencement of the treaty; until it is made, and the treaty formally begun, propositions and discussions seem, in consideration, to be untimely; nor can I enter into particulars without Mr. Jay, who is now ill with the influenza. My letter, therefore, to his Lordship is merely complimentary on his late appointment. I wish a continuance of your health in that at present sickly city, being with sincere esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I send you enclosed the late resolutions of the State of Maryland, by which the general disposition of people in America may be guessed respecting any treaty to be proposed by General Carleton, if intended, which I do not believe.

MXCII

TO THE EARL OF SHELBURNE

PASSY, 12 July, 1782.

MY LORD:—Mr. Oswald informing me that he is about to despatch a courier, I embrace the oppor-

tunity of congratulating your Lordship on your appointment to the Treasury. It is an extension of your power to do good, and in that view, if in no other, it must increase your happiness, which I heartily wish. Being with great and sincere respect, my Lord, your Lordship's, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.[1]

[1] Lord Shelburne wrote in reply to this note of congratulation:

"You do me the most acceptable justice in supposing my happiness intimately connected with that of mankind, and I can with truth assure you it will give me great satisfaction, in every situation, to merit the continuance of your good opinion."

Mr. Oswald wrote to the Earl of Shelburne on the same day Franklin's note was written, as follows:

"The courier has been in waiting some time for Dr. Franklin's letters. They are just come to hand, with one to myself, which I think proper to send to your Lordship, with the Maryland paper that was enclosed in it. I am glad to see by the Doctor's letter, as if he wishes a settlement with them may not be stopped, and think that may be presumed from his sending me this letter and the explanations therein mentioned.

"On the other hand, I cannot but be concerned at this report which has been conveyed to him, of a reserve intended in the grant of independence, being the first time I ever heard of it. At least Mr. Grenville did not tell me that his signification on that head was accompanied with any such reservation. And upon the faith of that I have in my letters to your Lordship and in conversation with Dr. Franklin always supposed that the grant was meant to be absolute and unconditional, which last, however, is a term I never used, thinking such qualification unnecessary. Its being given out that a difference subsisted and resignations happened on this account, must naturally occasion this hesitation in the commissioners of the colonies; and so I see by the Doctor's letter to me, he puts a sort of stoppage upon the preliminaries of settlement with them, which had been pretty well stretched out and defined in his conversations with me on the 10th instant. And until there is a further explanation under your Lordship's authority on the said head of independence, I am in a manner forbid, in the Doctor's letter, to go back upon the plan of that conference and to claim any right to the propositions thereof. Which, if complete independence was meant to be granted, is a little unlucky; and there is reason to regret that anybody should have been so wicked as to throw this stumbling-block in the way, by which not only peace with the

MXCIII

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

PASSY, 18 July, 1782.

SIR:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me this day, enclosing a memorial which relates to the interests of some subjects of the emperor, residing at Ostend, who allege that a ship of theirs has been taken by an American privateer, and carried into Boston, on pretence that

colonies is obstructed, but the general treaty is suspended, which I cannot help still thinking hangs upon a settlement with the colonies, and so, by this unlucky interjection, the peace of the country at home is disturbed and the blame is thrown upon the new administration and upon your Lordship by name."—*Paris, July 12th. MS. Letter.*

From the Earl of Shelburne to Richard Oswald.—"The king has given Mr. Grenville leave to return, and directed him to acquaint the French minister and Dr. Franklin that it is for the purpose of receiving fresh instructions, which will be necessary on the change of the department, taking care to repeat every assurance of the king's desire for peace, and not to leave any impression on the minds of those with whom he is in treaty of the least relaxation from the intention and spirit of the negotiation as hitherto carried on. I have the firmest reliance on Mr. Grenville's honor, that he will take care that the king's service shall not suffer in any respect by his departure. And I must strictly enjoin you not to mention to any person whatever this communication, till Mr. Grenville himself communicates his intentions and instructions and in his own manner."—*Whitehall, July 13th. MS. Letter.*

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"Of those with whom you are to treat I have no knowledge of any except Dr. Franklin. My knowledge of him is of long standing, though of no great degree of intimacy. I am not vain enough to suppose that any public conduct or principles of mine should have attracted much of his notice. But I believe he knows enough of them to be persuaded that no one has been more averse to the carrying on of this unhappy contest, or a more sincere friend to peace and reconciliation than myself. If he does me the justice to believe these sentiments to be sincere, he will be convinced that I shall show myself in the transaction of this business an unequivocal and zealous friend to pacification upon the fairest and most liberal terms."—*Whitehall, July 26th. MS. Letter.*

the property was English, etc. I shall immediately transmit the memorial to Congress, as desired. But there being courts of admiralty established in each of the United States, I conceive that the regular steps to be taken by the complainants would be an application for justice to those courts by some person on the spot, duly authorized by them as their agent; and in case the judgment of the court is not satisfactory, that then they appeal to the Congress, which cannot well take cognizance of such matters in the first instance.

The merchants of Ostend may possibly not have as yet correspondents established in all the States; but any merchant of credit in the country would transact such business on receiving their request, with the proper power of attorney; or, if his Imperial Majesty should think fit to appoint a consul-general to reside in those States, such an officer might at all times assist his compatriots with his counsels and protection, in any affairs that they might have in that country. I am the more particular in mentioning this to your Excellency, because I apprehend these cases may hereafter be frequent; and, if the complaints are to be addressed to you and me, we are likely to have a great deal of trouble, as I am informed that it has become a daily practice for outward-bound English ships to put into Ostend, and make a formal pretended sale of ship and cargo to a merchant of the place, who furnishes Imperial papers for the voyage under his own name, and receives a certain sum per cent. for the operation.

This is said to be a branch of great profit to the

Flemish merchants, and that a very great number of English ships are now at sea with such papers; and I suspect, even from their own manner of stating the transaction, that the ship and cargo reclaimed by the complainants are of that kind. This seems to me an abuse of the neutrality; as these fictitious profits are added to the advantage of real carriage for the belligerent nations, they make it too much the interest of neutral neighbors to foment wars and obstruct peace, that such profits may continue. And if it is to be understood as a settled point that such papers are to protect English property, the fitters-out of privateers from France, Spain, Holland, and America, will in another year be all ruined, for they will find none but Flemish ships upon the ocean. With the greatest respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXCIV

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 24 July, 1782.

Sir:—Enclosed I have the honor of sending to your Excellency extracts from two despatches of the British ministry (one of them to the commissioners for restoring peace in America), which are communicated to me by order of Lord Shelburne, expressly for the purpose of restoring confidence between him and me. Your Excellency will judge how proper they are for such a purpose, when the first is evidently calculated to create division, not only between France and us, but among ourselves; and the

second is contradictory respecting a principal point —the independence. I am, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MXCV

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Passy, 24 July, 1782.

Dear Sir:—In answer to your questions, Mr. Oswald is doing nothing, having neither powers nor instructions; and, being tired of doing nothing, has despatched a courier requesting leave to return. He has, I believe, received no letters, since I saw you, from Lord Shelburne. Mr. Grenville's return hither is, I think, doubtful, as he was particularly connected in friendship with Mr. Fox, but if he stays, I suppose some other will be sent, for I do not yet see sufficient reason to think they would abandon the negotiation, though, from some appearances, I imagine they are more intent upon dividing us than upon making a general peace. I have heard nothing further from Mr. Laurens, nor received any paper from him respecting Lord Cornwallis. And since that General's letter, written after the battle of Camden, and ordering not only the confiscation of rebels' estates, but the hanging of prisoners, has been made public, I should not wonder if the Congress were to disallow our absolution of his parole, and recall him to America. With everlasting esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

MXCVI

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES

VERSAILLES, 28 July, 1782.

SIR:—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write on the 24th instant, and the two papers sent at the same time. The contradictions which these contain are worthy of remark. Not only they destroy each the effect of the other, but they are both in manifest opposition to the ministerial declarations made by Mr. Grenville.

It appears that Lord Shelburne has more in view to produce a division between the king and the United States than to promote a just and durable peace; but we must believe that he cannot long avoid being convinced that his plan is essentially a mistaken one, and that there is no time to be lost in changing it, if peace is the object for which he is solicitous.

As to the king, sir, good faith and the fidelity which he owes to his allies will be the invariable guide of his conduct, for justice and moderation will ever lie at the foundation of the system of pacific measures adopted by his Majesty. If the English ministers are disposed to act in obedience to these principles, they can easily succeed in restoring peace upon reasonable conditions; but if they continue constantly changing their views and measures, if they desire intrigue rather than serious negotiation, they run the risk of committing themselves gratuitously, and of voluntarily prolonging the calamities of war.

It is to Lord Shelburne, however, who now has the direction of affairs in England, that it properly belongs to make these reflections. We can only hope that they may not escape his sagacity, and wait until that minister informs us in what manner he intends to pursue the negotiation begun with Mr. Grenville, or to follow up the answer lately given by the English ministry to the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg. I have the honor to be, with great sincerity, sir, etc.,

De Vergennes.

MXCVII

TO RICHARD OSWALD

Passy, 28 July, 1782.

Sir:—I have but this moment had an opportunity, by the departure of my company, of perusing the letters you put into my hands this afternoon; and I return them directly, without waiting till our interview to-morrow morning, because I would not give a moment's delay to the delivery of those directed to other persons.

The situation of Captain Asgill and his family afflicts me, but I do not see what can be done by any one here to relieve them. It cannot be supposed that General Washington has the least desire of taking the life of that gentleman. His aim is to obtain the punishment of a deliberate murder, committed on a prisoner in cold blood, by Captain Lippencot. If the English refuse to deliver up or punish this murderer, it is saying that they choose to preserve him

rather than Captain Asgill. It seems to me, therefore, that the application should be made to the English ministers for positive orders, directing General Carleton to deliver up Lippencot; which orders, being obtained, should be despatched immediately by a swift-sailing vessel. I do not think any other means can produce the effect desired. The cruel murders of this kind committed by the English on our people, since the commencement of the war, are innumerable. The Congress and their generals, to satisfy the people, have often threatened retaliation, but have always hitherto forborne to execute it; and they have been often insultingly told by their enemies that this forbearance did not proceed from humanity, but fear. General Greene, though he solemnly and publicly promised it in a proclamation, never made any retaliation for the murder of Colonel Haynes, and many others in Carolina; and the people, who now think, if he had fulfilled his promise, this crime would not have been committed, clamor so loudly, that I doubt General Washington cannot well refuse what appears to them so just and necessary for their common security. I am persuaded that nothing I could say to him on the occasion would have the least effect in changing his determination.[1]

Excuse me, then, if I presume to advise the despatching a courier immediately to London, proposing to the consideration of ministers the sending such orders to General Carleton directly. They would

[1] For the particulars relating to the case of Captain Asgill, see *Washington's Writings* Vol. I., p. 378; Vol. VIII., pp. 265, 301, 336, 361.

have an excellent effect in other ways. The post goes to-morrow morning at ten o'clock; but, as nine days have been spent in bringing the letters here by that conveyance, an express is preferable. With sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MXCVIII

Certificate of Conyngham's Commission

I do hereby certify whom it may concern that the Commissioners of the United States of America at the Court of France did issue on the first day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, to Captain Gustavus Conyngham, a commission of Congress appointing him a captain in the navy of the said States, and to command a vessel then fitting out at Dunkerque, on their account, to cruise against their enemies, in which vessel he took the English packet boat going from Harwick to Holland; but there being no war at that time between France and England, and the clandestine equipment of an armed vessel in a French port to cruise against the English being therefore an unjustifiable proceeding, he was apprehended by order of the French government, and his papers seized, among which was the said commission, which was never restored and cannot now be found. It is therefore that at the request of the said Captain Conyngham, and to ascertain the fact that such a commission was issued

to him, I give this certificate at Passy, this 7th day August, 1782.

B. FRANKLIN,
Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the Court of France.

Endorsement on back in handwriting of Charles Thompson:

"Read October 11, 1783.

"Referred to Mr. Lee, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Ellery."

MXCIX

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

PASSY, 8 August, 1782.

SIR:—Yesterday Mr. Oswald communicated to Mr. Jay and me a paper he had just received from his court, being a copy of the king's order to the attorney- or solicitor-general, to prepare a commission to pass the great seal, appointing him to treat with us; and he showed us a letter from Mr. Secretary Townshend, which expresses his concern that the commission itself could not be sent by this courier, the officers who were to expedite it being in the country, which would occasion a delay of eight or ten days; but that its being then sent might be depended on, and it was hoped the treaty might, in the meantime, be proceeded on. Mr. Oswald left with me a copy of the paper, which I enclose for your Excellency's consideration, and am, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's, etc., B. FRANKLIN.[1]

[1] *From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.*—"This afternoon I went to Passy, and carried a copy of the commission to Dr. Franklin.

MC

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES

VERSAILLES, 8 August, 1782.

SIR:—I have received the letter of this day, with which you have honored me, and the copy of the

After perusal, he said he was glad it was come; that he had been at Versailles yesterday, and Count de Vergennes had asked about it; and, upon the Doctor's telling him it was not come, he said he could do nothing with Mr. Fitzherbert till it arrived; as both treaties must go on together hand in hand.

"I showed him Mr. Townshend's letter accounting for a copy only being sent, as the chancellor and attorney-general were at a distance in the country. The Doctor seemed to be satisfied, and said, as on a former occasion, he hoped we should agree and not be long about it. There were no particulars touched upon; and, after sitting about a quarter of an hour, I proposed calling on Mr. Jay, the only other commissioner at Paris. The Doctor said it was right, and returned me the copy of the commission to be left with Mr. Jay, which he would bring back to the Doctor, as he was to dine at Passy.

"I accordingly returned to Paris, and called on Mr. Jay. He is a man of good sense, of frank, easy, and polite manners; he read over the copy of the commission, and Mr. Townshend's letter accounting for its not being under seal, and then said, by the quotation from the act of Parliament on the commission, he supposed it was meant that independence was to be treated upon, and was to be granted perhaps as the price of peace; that it ought to be no part of a treaty; it ought to have been expressly granted by an act of Parliament, and an order for all troops to be withdrawn previous to any proposal for treaty. As that was not done, the king, he said, ought to do it now by proclamation, and order all garrisons to be evacuated, and then close the American war by treaty. He said many things of a retrospective kind; such as the happy effects a declaration of that nature at earlier periods would have produced, if Great Britain had nobly and handsomely made this grant before such deep wounds had been given to that bias and attachment which till then subsisted all over that country in favor of Great Britain, even in spite of their petitions being repeatedly rejected. That in such case they would have undoubtedly concerted such plan of treaty, as would have not only restored peace, but would have laid a solid bottom of amity and conciliation, and such as would have obliterated from their memory in a short time all remembrance of preceding acts of distress or violence.

"But, by the continued enforcement of the same cruel measures, the

power which Mr. Oswald has communicated to you. The form in which it appears is not that which is usual on similar occasions, but it has not prevented

minds of the people in general all over that continent were almost totally alienated from Great Britain, so that they detested the very name of an Englishman. That it was true, a number of the older people had not forgot their former connections, and their inclinations might still lean towards England. But, when they were gone, and the younger generation come to take their place, who had never felt any of those impressions, those inclinations would be succeeded by grudge and resentment of every kind, upon reflecting upon what they had seen and their parents had suffered; that few of them but could recollect the loss of blood of some relation or other, devastation of their estates, and other misfortunes; on which occasion he ran into a detail of particulars, as unnecessary as unpleasant here to be repeated; and which I would not have touched upon if I did not think a free exposure of the features of this conversation may help to form a judgment of what may be expected in the issue, from the determination of this commissioner, and consequently what concessions on this very critical occasion it may be safe and proper to propose or insist upon.

"As information respecting the real sentiments of those gentlemen was the object I principally aimed at in the commencement of this business, I allowed Mr. Jay to go on without interruption, remarking only upon the whole, that, supposing there had been capital mistakes in the direction as well as in the execution of our measures, it would be hard to bring the charge home to the nation in general; and there was a good deal to be said even in excuse of the ministers, who presided over the conduct of those measures, considering that they were not personally acquainted with the circumstances of that country, and therefore could not but naturally listen to the information they received from those who were so acquainted; who came over from America as refugees, and who had upon all occasions insisted that we had so great a proportion of friends in all the colonies, as to require only a temporary support from government to bring every thing back to the original state of peace and subordination; that it was the search after those friends of government, which, in consequence of personal interference and correspondence in writing, has kept up and encouraged a continuance of the measures of coercion complained of, until they brought on at last the present unfortunate crisis.

"Mr. Jay admitted that some blame was justly to be imputed to the misrepresentation of the refugees, and other correspondents above mentioned, who, he said, at least many of them, were in a particular

me from forming my opinion in the first instance. I have bestowed the greatest attention on it, and, if you will be so good as to favor me with a visit on

manner concerned, on account of their private interests, to have things brought back by any means to their original state.

"He returned to the subject of independence, as not being satisfied with its being left as a matter of treaty. I said the method proposed was much the same as what he meant, and perhaps such as the nature of the British constitution made necessary. Independence of Great Britain, in the most complete sense, would be granted without any reserve, always supposing that their States should be equally independent of other nations. And so the treaty might proceed, in the course which was thus marked out for it, until it ended in peace. He said peace was very desirable, and the sooner the better. But the great point was to make such a peace as should be lasting. This brought back my attention to the same expression in Count de Vergennes' discourse in April, when I first had the honor to wait on him, and the more so that, almost in every conversation I have had with Dr. Franklin, he has made use of the same words, and delivered as in the way of aphorism, and as an indispensable principle, in the foundation of a final settlement with them and France.

"I never at these times chose to ask for an explanation, having no right to do so. I thought it was then too early to venture on such delicate ground, and so I remained at a loss as to the intended meaning of the words, although I strongly suspected the expression pointed at some unpleasant or unfavorable limitation on the conduct of Great Britain. But now, being in a somewhat different situation, and having so fair an opportunity, which I wished not to miss, in order to guess at the meaning of this phrase, I replied that such long intermission of war was certainly very desirable. But what security could there be given for a continuance of peace, but such as generally put an end to all wars, being that of treaty; but which was often found to be a very inadequate security, as was the case of the last treaty, concluded at this place only twenty years ago.

"To this Mr. Jay replied he would not give a farthing for any parchment security whatever. They had never signified any thing since the world began, when any prince or state, of either side, found it convenient to break through them. But the peace he meant was such, or so to be settled, that it should not be the *interest* of either party to violate it. This, he said, was the only security that could be proposed to prevent those frequent returns of war, by which the world was kept in continual disturbance."—*Paris, August 7th. MS. Letter.*

Saturday morning, I shall confer with you and Mr. Jay, if it will be convenient for him to accompany you. I have the honor to be, most sincerely, sir, etc., De Vergennes.

MCI

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

Philadelphia, 9 August, 1782.

Dear Sir:—Having written to Mr. Jay, who, I presume, is with you, I do not think it necessary to repeat what I have mentioned to him. We have not heard from you since March; a very long period, considering the interesting events that have taken place between that time and this. Many vessels have arrived without bringing us a line from you. I am apprehensive that Mr. Barclay does not communicate to you the frequent opportunities that offer of writing. I shall write to him upon the subject.

Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby have informed the general that a negotiation for a general peace is now on foot, and that the king, his master, has agreed to yield the independence of America without making it conditional. I shall enclose a copy of his letter at large, which refers to another object—the exchange of prisoners. This great point once yielded, I see nothing that will obstruct your negotiations, except three points of discussion, which I have before written to you about. I wish it had been possible to obtain the estimates I mention, as

they might have been rendered useful to you upon one of them. But the negligence of the governors or legislatures of the several States has rendered all my endeavors hitherto unsuccessful, notwithstanding repeated promises to give this subject their earliest attention. The restoration of confiscated property has become utterly impossible, and the attempt would throw the country into the utmost confusion.

The fisheries are too important an object for you to lose sight of; and, as to the back lands, I do not conceive that England can seriously expect to derive any benefit from them that will be equivalent to the jealousy that the possession of them would awaken and keep alive between her and this country. I transmit to you a bill for seventy-one thousand three hundred and eighty livres, being the amount of one quarter's salary to yourself and Messrs. Jay, Adams, Carmichael, Dana, and Dumas. No provision is made for the private secretaries or contingencies, not having been furnished with an account of them. I also send bills for the first quarter, commencing in January, so that you will, on the receipt of this, be enabled to pay one half year's salary to our ministers and their secretaries.

I just now learn that Carleton has published his and Digby's letter to the General. The design of this must either be to see whether the people of this country will catch so eagerly at the proposition for a peace which yields them their independence, as to be careless about the alliance, or to impress us with an idea that we are more indebted for our freedom to the generosity of Great Britain than to the

attention of France to our interests in the general treaty. It is not to be doubted that the good sense and the gratitude of this country will defeat both these objects. I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

P. S.—If Mr. Jay should not be at Paris, I must beg you to open and decipher for him the letter of this month, and the resolution contained therein, marked on the back below the seal, *August*, and send it to him by the earliest opportunity.

MCII

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PASSY, 12 August, 1782.

SIR:—I have lately been honored with your several letters of March 9th and May 22d and 30th. The paper containing a state of the commerce in North America, and explaining the necessity and utility of convoys for its protection, I have laid before the minister, accompanied by a letter pressing that it be taken into immediate consideration; and I hope it may be attended with success.

The order of Congress for liquidating the accounts between this court and the United States, was executed before it arrived. All the accounts against us for money lent, and stores, arms, ammunition, clothing, etc., furnished by government, were brought in and examined, and a balance received, which made the debt amount to the even sum of eighteen millions,

exclusive of the Holland loan, for which the king is guaranty. I send a copy of the instrument to Mr. Morris. In reading it you will discover several fresh marks of the king's goodness towards us, amounting to the value of near two millions. These, added to the free gifts before made to us at different times, form an object of at least twelve millions, for which no returns but that of gratitude and friendship are expected. These, I hope, may be everlasting. The constant good understanding between France and the Swiss Cantons, and the steady benevolence of this crown towards them, afford us a well-grounded hope that our alliance may be as durable and as happy for both nations; there being strong reasons for our union, and no crossing interests between us. I write fully to Mr. Morris on money affairs, who will doubtless communicate to you my letter, so that I need say the less to you on that subject.

The letter to the king was well received; the accounts of your rejoicings on the news of the Dauphin's birth gave pleasure here; as do the firm conduct of Congress in refusing to treat with General Carleton, and the unanimous resolutions of the Assemblies of different States on the same subject. All ranks of this nation appear to be in good humor with us, and our reputation rises throughout Europe. I understand from the Swedish ambassador, that their treaty with us will go on as soon as ours with Holland is finished; our treaty with France with such improvements as that with Holland may suggest, being intended as the basis.

There have been various misunderstandings and

mismanagements among the parties concerned in the expedition of the *Bon Homme Richard*, which have occasioned delay in dividing the prize money. M. de Chaumont, who was chosen by the captains of all the vessels in the expedition as their agent, has long been in a state little short of bankruptcy, and some of the delays have possibly been occasioned by the distress of his affairs. He now informs me that the money is in the hands of the Minister of the Marine. I shall in a few days present the memorial you propose, with one relating to the prisoners, and will acquaint you with the answer. Mr. Barclay is still in Holland; when he returns he may take into his hands what money can be obtained on that account.

I think your observations respecting the Danish complaints through the minister of France perfectly just. I will receive no more of them by that channel, and will give your reasons to justify my refusal.

Your approbation of my idea of a medal, to perpetuate the memory of York and Saratoga victories, gives me great pleasure, and encourages me to have it struck. I wish you would acquaint me with what kind of a monument at York the emblems required are to be fixed on—whether an obelisk or a column; its dimensions; whether any part of it is to be marble, and the emblems carved on it; and whether the work is to be executed by the excellent artists in that way which Paris affords; and, if so, to what expense they are to be limited. This puts me in mind of a monument I got made here and sent to America, by order of Congress, five years since. I have heard of

its arrival, and nothing more. It was admired here for its elegant antique simplicity of design, and the various beautiful marbles used in its composition. It was intended to be fixed against a wall in the State-house of Philadelphia. I know not why it has been so long neglected; it would, methinks, be well to inquire after it, and get it put up somewhere. Directions for fixing it were sent with it. I enclose a print of it. The inscription in the engraving is not on the monument; it was merely the fancy of the engraver. There is a white plate of marble left smooth to receive such inscription as the Congress should think proper.[1]

Our countrymen, who have been prisoners in England, are sent home, a few excepted, who were sick, and who will be forwarded as soon as recovered. This eases us of a very considerable charge.

I communicated to the Marquis de Lafayette the paragraph of your letter which related to him. He is still here, and, as there seems not so much likelihood of an active campaign in America, he is probably more useful where he is. His departure, however, though delayed, is not absolutely laid aside.

The second changes in the ministry of England have occasioned, or have afforded, pretences for various delays in the negotiation for peace. Mr. Grenville had two successive imperfect commissions. He was at length recalled, and Mr. Fitzherbert is now

[1] This was probably the monument ordered by Congress to be erected to the memory of General Montgomery. Dr. Franklin was directed to procure it in Paris, at an expense not exceeding three hundred pounds sterling. See *Journals of Congress*, January 25, 1776. The monument was placed in the portico of St. Paul's Church, in the city of New York.

arrived to replace him, with a commission in due form to treat with France, Spain, and Holland. Mr. Oswald, who is here, is informed by a letter from the new Secretary of State that a commission empowering him to treat with the commissioners of Congress will pass the seals, and be sent him in a few days; till he arrives, this court will not proceed in its own negotiation.[1] I send the *Enabling Act*,

[1] *From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.*—"Finding no alteration in the Doctor's manner from the usual good-natured and friendly way in which he had formerly behaved to me (as I had reason to apprehend, from what had lately passed with his colleague), and having a quiet and convenient opportunity, I was anxious to learn whether the Doctor entertained those ideas, which in the preceding papers I suspected Mr. Jay had in view, regarding the *means* of preventing future wars, by settling the peace in such a manner as it should not be the interest of the parties to break it.

"With that intent, I told the Doctor I had had a long conversation with Mr. Jay, of which, no doubt, he had been informed; and in which he had not spared us in his reflections on what had passed in the American war; and that I could not but be sorry he had just reason for the severity of some of them; at the same time I was pleased to find he was equally well disposed to peace, and to bring it quickly to a conclusion, as we were, and also that it should be a lasting one, as he (the Doctor) had always proposed; and that I was only at a loss as to how that could be ascertained, otherwise than by treaty, which Mr. Jay declared he paid no regard to; and said it could be only depended upon as lasting by its being settled, so as it should not be the *interest* of any of the parties to break it. I told the Doctor this was certainly the best security, if one could tell how to accommodate the terms so justly to the mutual interests of the parties, as to obviate every temptation to encroachment or trespass.

"The Doctor replied that the method was very plain and easy; which was to settle the terms in the first projection on an equal, just, and reasonable footing; and so as neither party should have cause to complain, being the plan which Count de Vergennes had in view, and had always recommended in his conversations with him on the subject of peace. And the Doctor said it was a good plan, and the only one that could make the peace lasting. And which also put him in mind of a story in the Roman history, in the early time of the republic; when

as it is called. Mr. Jay will acquaint you with what passes between him and the Spanish ambassador, respecting the proposed treaty with Spain. I will

being at war with the state of Tarentum, and the Tarentines having the worst of it, they sent to the Senate to ask for peace. The ambassador being called in, the Senate told him they agreed to give them peace, and then asked how long he thought it would last; to which he answered: 'That would be according to the conditions; if they were reasonable, the peace would be lasting; if not, it would be short.' The Senate seemed to resent this freedom of expression; but a member got up and applauded it, as fair and manly, and as justly challenging a due regard to moderation on their part.

"It is not easy to say how happy I felt myself at the conclusion of this quotation. The terms and conditions, it is true, remained undecided; and they no doubt comprehend a very serious question, although not material to what I aimed at. Nor did I conceive them to lie so much in my way, as in that of another department, by the concern which the French minister took in settling the principle. Nor did I trouble myself about the possible inefficacy of it, as still depending in some degree on the obligations of treaty, however cautiously adjusted. And therefore I did not think it proper to touch upon that point, nor to say any thing on the subject of terms and conditions.

"The second thing the Doctor touched upon was *independence*. He said by the quotations of acts of Parliament, he saw it was included in the commission; but that Mr. Grenville had orders to *grant it in the first instance*. I replied it was true; and that, though supposed to be granted under this commission, and in the course of the treaty, I hoped it would make no difference with gentlemen who were so well disposed to put an end to this unhappy business, as I knew him to be. He then asked if I had instructions. I said I had, and that they were under his Majesty's hand and seal; and that by them it appeared independence, unconditional in every sense, would be granted, and that I saw no reason why it should not make the first article of the settlement or treaty. That I was sorry Mr. Jay should have hesitated so much on that head, as if it ought to have been done separately, and by act of Parliament; and now, Parliament being up, that the grant should be made by proclamation. That I did not pretend to judge whether the right and authority of a grant of that kind, so conveyed, would be proper and effectual. There seemed, however, to be one inconvenience in it, that a proclamation became an address to the Congress, and to every part of their provinces jointly and separately; and might, so far, interfere with the progress of the present commission,

only mention that my conjecture of that court's design to coop us up within the Alleghany Mountains is now manifested. I hope Congress will insist on the Mississippi as the boundary, and the free

under which we hoped that all pretensions would be properly and expeditiously settled. That in this matter he was a better judge than I could pretend to be. I was only sure of one thing, that the affair might be as effectually done as in the way proposed by Mr. Jay.

"The Doctor replied that Mr. Jay was a lawyer, and might think of things that did not occur to those who were not lawyers. And he at last spoke as if he did not see much or any difference; but still used such a mode of expression, as I could not positively say would preclude him from insisting on Mr. Jay's proposition, or some previous or separate acknowledgment. I was glad to get clear of the subject, without pushing for further explanation or discussion.

"The Doctor at last touched upon Canada, as he generally does upon the like occasions, and said there could be no dependence on peace and good neighborhood while that country continued under a different government, as it touched their states in so great a stretch of frontier. I told him I was sensible of that inconvenience; but, having no orders, the consideration of that matter might possibly be taken up at some future time. At my coming away, the Doctor said that, although the proper commission was not come over, yet, he said, Mr. Jay would call on me with a copy of their credentials. This being Sunday, he said the copy would be made out on Monday. On Tuesday he must go to Versailles, being the levee day; but on Wednesday they would call with their papers,"—*Paris, August 13th. MS.*

In another despatch, written two days later, Mr. Oswald gave a further account of his conversations as follows:

"At proper times I said what occurred to me as necessary to bring this question to some sort of desirable period; and in particular wished to have Mr. Jay's idea of such way of declaring this unconnected ascertainment of independence, as would satisfy them.

"His former proposal of doing it by proclamation, he gave up, as liable to sundry objections, needless to be here repeated. He then proposed it should be done by a particular and separate deed, or patent, under the great seal, in which my commission for a treaty might also be narrated; and that such patent should be put into the possession of the commissioners, to be by them sent over to Congress; and accordingly Mr. Jay brought me a draft of the patent. As I could see no other way of satisfying those gentlemen, and it appearing highly

navigation of the river, from which they could entirely exclude us.

An account of a terrible massacre of the Moravian Indians has been put into my hands. I send you

necessary that some beginning should be made with them, since, until that was done, the foreign treaty could not proceed in its course, I agreed to send the draft over to his Majesty's Secretary of State by a courier express for that purpose, with my own opinion rather in favor of the proposal than otherwise. ' And so it was settled with the commissioners. However, afterwards, in casting my eye over the preamble of the draft where it is stated, *as if Sir Guy Carleton had orders to propose a treaty of peace to the Congress*, and believing this to be a mistaken quotation of memory from the copy of Sir Guy's instructions in the possession of the commissioners, and, as such, inferring an unjust imputation on the consistency of the conduct of administration, and apprehending also that the commissioners' entertaining a doubt of this nature might have been the reason why they wished to be guarded with all this caution in requiring this special acknowledgment under the great seal, besides keeping their minds in suspense in all future proceedings, where confidence in good faith ought to smooth the path on many occasions to a happy termination; I say, in reflecting on these things, I thought it my duty, and I confess I was, on my own particular account, a little anxious to have an explanation of this matter.

"And, therefore, after it had been agreed, in the presence of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, that I should send off the draft, I took the liberty to point out to them the said preamble, telling them that there might be a possibility of mistake in the quotation in the last part of the paragraph. Mr. Jay said he had not the copy of Sir Guy's instructions, and acknowledged he had inserted those words from a general impression that remained on his memory, and could not positively say but there might be some mistake. Dr. Franklin said he had the copy of the instructions, and would send a duplicate to Mr. Jay in a few hours. He did so, and I waited on Mr. Jay to see the papers. Upon the perusal, he owned he had been mistaken, and that Sir Guy's instructions went no further than an order of communication, to inform the Congress and General Washington that his Majesty intended (or had given directions) to grant free and unconditional independence to the Thirteen States. Finding this prejudice entirely removed, and that Mr. Jay was perfectly satisfied that the whole course of proceeding in this matter was fair and consistent, I asked him what occasion there was then for this extraordinary caution of insisting on the solemnity of

the papers, that you may see how the fact is represented in Europe. I hope measures will be taken to secure what is left of those unfortunate people.

Mr. Laurens is at Nantes, waiting for a passage with his family to America. His state of health is unfortunately very bad. Perhaps the sea air may recover him, and restore him well to his country. I heartily wish it. He has suffered much by his confinement. Be pleased, sir, to present my duty to the Congress, and assure them of my most faithful services. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

such separate deed under the great seal, since a preliminary clause or article in the treaty, as always intended, might do the whole business, by making it absolute, and not depending, in the view of ascertainment, on the event of other or subsequent articles, and which might be so expressed as to remove every doubt as to the independence being as free and unconditional as they desired it to be. In confirmation of the greater expediency and despatch of this method, and that it was the sincere intention of his Majesty to make this grant in the precise way they desired, I thought myself warranted in telling him that I had a full power in my instructions to give them entire satisfaction on this head, and made no scruple in showing it to him, as it stood in the fourth article thereof.

"Upon the perusal, Mr. Jay said that was enough, and he was fully satisfied; and there was no occasion for any other writing on the subject; that resting upon this would save time, and he was happy, also, that this discovery of his mistake prevented their asking of his Majesty any further proof of his good intentions towards them than what were actually meant and conveyed in those my instructions. Upon this I promised immediately to send off this representation, and also to desire leave and permission to make an absolute acknowledgment of the independence of the States to stand invariably as the first part of the proposed treaty with those gentlemen. Meantime I think it proper to send enclosed the intended draft (though now of no use here), to show, by the words scored in the preamble, the grounds of those gentlemen's hesitation, and what gave occasion for a separate deed under the great seal."—*Paris, August 15th. MS. Letter.*

MCIII

TO ROBERT MORRIS

PASSY, 12 August, 1782.

SIR:—I have received (many of them at the same time) your sundry letters of March the 23d, April 8th and 17th, May 17th, 18th, two of the 23d and 29th. It would be a satisfaction to me if you would likewise mention from time to time the dates of those you receive from me.

Most of your letters press my obtaining more money for the present year. The late losses suffered in the West Indies, and the unforeseen necessary expenses the reparation there and here must occasion, render it more difficult and, I am told, impossible; though the good disposition of the court towards us continues perfect. All I can say on the head of money, more than I have said in preceding letters, is that I confide you will be careful not to bankrupt your banker by your drafts; and I will do my utmost, that those you draw shall be duly honored.

The plan you intimate for discharging the bills in favor of Beaumarchais, though well imagined, was impracticable. I had accepted them, and he had discounted them, or paid them away, or divided them amongst his creditors. They were therefore in different hands, with whom I could not manage the transactions proposed. Besides, I had paid them punctually when they became due, which was before the receipt of your letter on that subject. That he was furnished with his funds by the government here, is a supposition of which no foundation appears;

he says it was by a company he had formed; and when he solicited me to give up a cargo in part of payment, he urged, with tears in his eyes, the distress himself and associates were reduced to by our delay of remittances. I am glad to see that it is intended to appoint a commissioner to settle all our public accounts in Europe. I hope he will have better success with M. Beaumarchais than I have had. He has often promised solemnly to render an account in two or three days. Years have since elapsed and he has not yet done it. Indeed, I doubt whether his books have been so well kept as to make it possible.

You direct me, in yours of May 17th, to pay over into the hands of Mr. Grand, on your account, such moneys belonging to the United States as may be in Europe, distinct from those to be advanced for the current year. I would do it with pleasure, if there were any such. There may be, indeed, some in Holland, raised by the new loan, but that is not in my disposition, though I have no doubt that Mr. Adams will, on occasion, apply it in support of your credit. As to all the aids given by the crown, all the sums borrowed of it, and all the Dutch loans of ten millions, though the orders to receive have been given to me, the payments from the *Trésor Royal* have all been made on my orders in favor of Mr. Grand, and the money again paid away by him on my drafts for public services and expenses, as you will see by his accounts; so that I never saw or touched a livre of it, except what I received from him in discharge of my salary and some disburse-

ments. He has even received the whole six millions of the current year, so that I have nothing in any shape to pay over to him. On occasion of my lately desiring to know the state of our funds, that I might judge whether I could undertake to pay what you were directed to pay to Mr. William Lee by vote of Congress as soon as the state of public finances would admit, Mr. Grand wrote me a note, with a short sketch of their then supposed situation, which I enclose. You will probably have from him, as soon as possible, a more perfect account; but this will serve to show that I could not prudently comply with your wish, of making that payment to Mr. Lee, and I have accordingly declined it, the less unwillingly, as he is entitled by the vote to interest.

I send herewith the accounts of the supplies you have received in goods, which I promised in my last.

The sum of their value is included in the settlement made with this court, mentioned in a former letter. Herewith I also send a copy of the contract, which has been long in hand, and but lately completed. The term of the first yearly payment we are to make was readily changed at my request, from the first to the third year after the peace; the other marks of the king's bounty towards us will be seen in the instrument. The interest already due and forgiven, amounts to more than a million and a half. What might become due before the peace is uncertain. The charges of exchange, commissions, brokerage, etc., of the Dutch loan amount to more than five hundred thousand livres, which is also given, so that we have the whole sum net, and are to pay for

it but four per cent. This liquidation of our accounts with the court was completed before the vote of Congress directing it came to hand. Mr. Grand examined all the particulars, and I have no doubt of its being approved.

Mr. Grand, to whom I have communicated your letter of April 17th, will soon write to you fully. We shall observe the general rule you give respecting the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth bills. The attention, care, and pains necessary to prevent (by exact accounts of those accepted, and an examination of those offered) impositions, which are often attempted by presenting at a distant time, the second, third, etc., are much greater than I could have imagined. Much has been saved by that attention, of which, of late, we keep an account; but the hazard of loss by such attempts might be diminished, together with the trouble of examination, by making fewer small bills.

Your conduct, activity, and address as a financier and provider for the exigencies of the state are much admired and praised here, their good consequences being so evident, particularly with regard to the rising credit of our country and the value of bills. No one but yourself can enjoy your growing reputation more than I do.

Mr. Grand has undertaken to pay any balance that may be found due to Messrs. le Couteulx out of the money in his hands. Applying for so small a sum as five thousand livres would be giving trouble for a trifle, as all applications for money must be considered in council.

Mr. Grand having already received the whole six millions, either in money or accepted bills, payable at different periods, I expect he will deliver up to me the bills for that sum, which you have drawn upon me, the rather as they express value received by you. I never heard of any mention here of intended monthly payments, or that the money could not be obtained but by your drafts. I enclose a letter, by which the payment was ordered of the last three millions.

I observe what you mention of the order, that the ministers' salaries are to be hereafter paid in America. I hereby empower and desire you to receive and remit mine. I do not doubt your doing it regularly and timely; for a minister without money, I perceive, makes a ridiculous figure here, though secure from arrests. I have taken a quarter's advance of salary from the 4th of last month, supposing it not intended to *muzzle* immediately *the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.*

With great esteem, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—Your boys are well, and Mr. Ridley and Mr. Barclay still in Holland.

MCIV

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON

Passy, 17 August, 1782.

My Dear Good Child:—I received your kind letter by Dr. Shuttleworth. It always gives me

great pleasure to hear of the welfare of you and yours. As to myself, I continue as hearty as at my age could be expected, and as cheerful as ever you knew me, hoping erelong to see peace and my friends, whose continued regard for me, after so long and so thorough an acquaintance with me, I esteem among my honors and felicities.

It is now a quarter of a century since our friendship commenced; and, though we lived much of the time together, it has never been interrupted by the smallest misunderstanding or coolness. In this observation I include your good mother, from whom I had lately the pleasure of receiving a few lines. I embrace you both with the most tender affection, being ever sincerely yours,

B. Franklin.

MCV

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 24 August, 1782.

Mr. Franklin presents his respectful compliments to Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes. He has searched for the Boston paper, 6th June, in which mention is made of 4,000 troops being embarked at New York, but cannot now find it. Thinks it may be in the hands of M. le Marquis de Lafayette, and that it was dated about the beginning of July. He sends enclosed a copy of two articles relating to an embarkation intended. In a letter he received from an intelligent person at Warwick in Rhode Island,

dated June 25th, it is said: "We have been lately surprised with considerable fleets appearing as if they intended to repossess Rhode Island, but they passed by after three or four days." From their passing by Rhode Island, Mr. F. imagined they were gone to reinforce Halifax, or Newfoundland and Quebec.

MCVI

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON

PASSY, 3 September, 1782.

SIR:—I have just received yours, dated the 23d of June.[1] The accounts of the general sentiments of our people respecting propositions from England, and the rejoicings on the birth of the Dauphin, give pleasure here; and it affords me much satisfaction to find the conduct of Congress approved by all who hear or speak of it, and to see all the marks of a constantly growing regard for us, and confidence in us among those in whom such sentiments are most to be desired.

I hope the affair of Captain Asgill was settled as it ought to be, by the punishment of Lippencot. Applications have been made here to obtain letters in favor of the young gentleman. Enclosed I send you a copy of the answer I gave to that made to me.

I had before acquainted M. Tousard that his pension would be paid in America, and there only, it being unreasonable to expect that Congress should

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 366.

open a pay office in every part of the world where pensioners should choose to reside. I shall communicate to him that part of your letter.

You wish to know what allowance I make to my private secretary. My grandson, William T. Franklin, came over with me and served me as a private secretary during the time of the commissioners; and no secretary to the commission arriving, though we had been made to expect one, he did business for us all, and this without any allowance for his services, though both Mr. Lee and Mr. Deane at times mentioned it to me as a thing proper to be done, and in justice due to him. When I became appointed sole minister here, and the whole business, which the commissioners had before divided with me, came into my hands, I was obliged to exact more service from him, and he was indeed, by being so long in the business, become capable of doing more. At length, in the beginning of the year 1781, when he became of age, considering his constant close attention to the duties required, and his having thereby missed the opportunity of studying the law, for which he had been intended, I determined to make him some compensation for the time past, and fix some compensation for the time to come, till the pleasure of Congress respecting him should be known. I accordingly settled an account with him, allowing him from the beginning of December, 1776, to the end of 1777, the sum of three thousand four hundred livres; and for the year 1778, the sum of four thousand livres; for 1779, four thousand, eight hundred livres; and for 1780, six thousand livres. Since that

time I have allowed him at the rate of three hundred louis per annum, being what I saw had been allowed by Congress to the secretary of Mr. William Lee, who could not have had, I imagine, a fourth part of the business to go through; since my secretary, besides the writing and copying the papers relative to my common ministerial transactions, has had all those occasioned by my acting in the various employments of judge of admiralty, consul, purchaser of goods for the public, etc., besides that of accepting the Congress bills, a business that requires being always at home, bills coming by post from different ports and countries, and often requiring immediate answers, whether good or not; and to that end, it being necessary to examine by the books, exactly kept of all preceding acceptances, in order to detect double presentations, which happen very frequently. The great number of these bills makes almost sufficient business for one person, and the confinement they occasion is such, that we cannot allow ourselves a day's excursion into the country, and the want of exercise has hurt our healths in several instances.

The Congress pay much larger salaries to some secretaries who, I believe, deserve them; but not more than my grandson does the comparatively small one I have allowed to him, his fidelity, exactitude, and address in transacting business being really what one could wish in such an officer; and the genteel appearance a young gentleman in his station is obliged to make, requiring at least such an income. I do not mention the extraordinary business that has been imposed upon us in this embassy,

as a foundation for demanding higher salaries than others. I never solicited for a public office, either for myself or any relation, yet I never refused one that I was capable of executing, when public service was in question; and I never bargained for salary, but contented myself with whatever my constituents were pleased to allow me. The Congress will therefore consider every article charged in my account, distinct from the salary originally voted, not as what I presume to insist upon, but as what I propose only for their consideration, and they will allow what they think proper.

You desire an accurate estimate of those contingent expenses. I enclose copies of two letters [1] which passed between Mr. Adams and me on the subject, and show the articles of which they consist. Their amount in different years may be found in my accounts, except the article of house rent, which has never yet been settled; M. de Chaumont, our landlord, having originally proposed to leave it till the end of the war, and then to accept for it a piece of American land from the Congress, such as they might judge equivalent. If the Congress did intend all contingent charges whatever to be included in the salary, and do not think proper to pay on the whole so much, in that case I would humbly suggest that the saving may be most conveniently made by a diminution of the salary, leaving the contingencies to be charged; because they may necessarily be very different in different years, and at different courts.

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 238.

I have been more diffuse on this subject, as your letter gave occasion for it, and it is probably the last time I shall mention it. Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to Congress, assure them of my best services, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—As you will probably lay this letter before Congress, I take the liberty of joining to it an extract of my letter to the President, of the 12th of March, 1781, and of repeating my request therein contained, relative to my grandson. I enclose, likewise, extracts of letters from Messrs. Jay and Laurens, which both show the regard those gentlemen have for him, and their desire of his being noticed by the Congress.

MCVII

TO JOHN JAY

Passy, 4 September, 1782.

Dear Sir:—Mr. Oswald's courier being returned, with directions to him to make the independence of America the first article in the treaty, I would wait on you if I could, to discourse on the subject; but, as I cannot, I wish to see you here this evening, if not inconvenient to you. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MCVIII

FROM RICHARD OSWALD

PARIS, 5 September, 1782.

SIR:—In consequence of the notice I have just now had from Mr. Jay, of your desire of an extract from my last letter from the Secretary of State, regarding the proposed treaty on the subject of American affairs, and my authority in relation thereto, I take the liberty to send the same enclosed, which, together with the powers contained in the commission, which I had the honor of laying before you and Mr. Jay, I am hopeful will satifsy you of the willingness and sincere desire of his Majesty to give you entire content on that important subject.[1]

[1] *From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.*—"I have received and laid before the king your several letters, together with the three packets of papers containing conversations with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, and your observations thereupon; and I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's approbation of your conduct in communicating to the American commissioners the fourth article of your instructions, which could not but convince them that the negotiations for peace, and cession of independence to the Thirteen United Colonies, were intended to be carried on and concluded with the commissioners in Europe. Those gentlemen having expressed their satisfaction concerning that article, it is hoped they will not entertain a doubt of his Majesty's determination to exercise in the fullest extent the powers with which the act of Parliament hath invested him, by granting to America full, complete, and unconditional independence, in the most explicit manner, as an article of treaty."

The above is the extract alluded to by Mr. Oswald in the text. The following particulars, contained in the same letter and constituting a part of Mr. Oswald's instructions, were not communicated to the American commissioners.

"But you are at the same time to represent to them, if necessary, that the king is not enabled by that act to cede independence unconnected with a truce or treaty of peace; and that therefore the cession of independence cannot stand as a single separate article, to be ratified

This extract I would have sent before now, if I had thought you wished to have it before I had the

by itself, but may be (and his Majesty is willing it shall be) the first article of the treaty, unconditionally of any compensation or equivalent to be thereafter required in the said treaty. You will observe that the very article of your instructions referred to is conformable to this idea, as it is expressly mentioned to be offered by his Majesty as the price of peace; and that independence, declared and ratified absolutely and irrevocably, and not depending upon the event of concluding an entire treaty, for the purpose of independence alone, and not for a *peace* or *truce;* to which all the powers of the act refer.

"If the American commissioners are, as his Majesty is, sincerely disposed to a speedy termination of the calamities of war, it is not to be conceived that they will be inclined to delay and to embarrass the negotiation, by refusing to accept the independence as an article of the treaty, which, by that means, may be to them secured finally and completely, so as to leave no possible ground of jealousy or suspicion. But, in order to give the most unequivocal proof of the king's earnest wish to remove every impediment, I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's disposition to agree to the plan of pacification proposed by Dr. Franklin himself, including, as it does, the great point in question as part of the first article.

"The articles as specified by Dr. Franklin to you, and recited in your letter to the Earl of Shelburne of the 10th July last, are as follows:

"1st. Of the first class *necessary* to be granted, independence full and complete in every sense, to the Thirteen States, and all the troops to be withdrawn from thence.

"2d. A settlement of the boundaries of *their* colonies and the loyal colonies.

"3d. A confinement of the boundaries of Canada, at least to what they were before the last act of Parliament, you think in 1774; if not, to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing.

"4th. A freedom of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland and elsewhere, as well for fish as whales.

"These articles were stated by you as all that Dr. Franklin thought *necessary;* and his Majesty, trusting that they were suggested with perfect sincerity and good faith, has authorized you to go to the *full extent* of them."—*Whitehall, September 1st. MS. Letter.*

It is worthy of particular observation here, that the original instructions to Mr. Oswald authorized him to accede to the articles which had been proposed by Dr. Franklin as ESSENTIAL, one of which was the right of the United States to the fisheries. Although the ministry afterwards made a strong effort to modify these terms, and especially the article in

honor of waiting on you myself; which was only delayed until I should be informed by Mr. Jay that you were well enough to see me upon business.

regard to the fisheries, yet there is no evidence that they intended at any time to insist on this modification as a *sine quâ non;* nor is it ever intimated by Mr. Oswald, in his letters to the ministry, that in any event this claim would be relinquished. On the contrary, he repeatedly states that Dr. Franklin, as well as the other commissioners, was determined on that point.

In writing to Mr. Townshend, on the 11th of September, Mr. Oswald says:

"As to fishing on the Great Bank, or any other Bank, I own I did not think it material to ask any questions, as I supposed the privilege would not be denied them; or, if denied, I doubted whether their exclusion could be maintained but by continuing in a state of perpetual quarrel with the people of the New England governments. An explanation was still the less necessary, as a question on the same subject would come under our consideration in our treaty with France. In the determination of this last point, perhaps it may be no loss to Great Britain that the Americans are (with respect to the fishing part) admitted to an equal privilege with the French."—*MS. Letter.*

From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.—"Two days ago Dr. Franklin sent to me, desiring a copy of the instructions which I had promised. I copied out the first part of your letter of the 1st instant, leaving out some immaterial words, and sent it enclosed in a letter from myself, of both of which papers there is a duplicate under this cover. Since then I have seen Mr. Jay frequently, and have used every argument in my power to get him over his objections to treating without a separate and absolute acknowledgment of independence. And for that purpose I found it necessary, although unwillingly, yet of my own private opinion, to tell him that there might be a doubt whether the powers in the act of Parliament went so far as to allow of making that grant otherwise than as in the course of a treaty of peace, which, as you are pleased to observe, was the sole object of the act.

"I said, moreover, that if they still persisted in this demand, there could be nothing done until the meeting of Parliament, and perhaps for some considerable time thereafter; that certain articles had been already agreed upon, and if we went on and settled the treaty on that footing, with independence standing as the first article of it, we might give opportunity to the foreign treaties to be going on at the same time; so as, for a conclusion of a general peace, there might be nothing wanting at the meeting of Parliament, but a confirmation of the first article,

I heartily wish you a recovery of your health, and am, with sincere esteem and regard, sir, your most obedient humble servant, RICHARD OSWALD.

in case it should be then thought necessary, which I imagined would not be the case.

"To avoid being tedious, I forbear repeating a great many more things to the same purpose, which passed in those conversations with Mr. Jay. Dr. Franklin being so much out of order, I could not think of disturbing him by frequent visits to Passy, and therefore continued taking proper opportunities of talking to Mr. Jay; and the more readily that, by any judgment I could form of his real intentions, I could not possibly doubt of their pointing directly at a speedy conclusion of the war, and also leaning as favorably to the side of England as might be consistent with the duties of the trust he has undertaken.

"To convince me that nothing less than this stood in the way of agreeing to my request of accommodating this difficulty in some shape or other, he told me at last, if Dr. Franklin would consent, he was willing, in place of an express and previous acknowledgment of independence, to accept of a constructive denomination of character, to be introduced in the preamble of the treaty, by only describing their constituents as the Thirteen United States of America. Upon my appearing to listen to this, and to consent to the substitution, he said: 'But you have no authority in your commission to treat with us under that denomination; for the sundry descriptions of the parties to be treated with, as they stand in that commission, will not bear such application to the character we are directed to claim and abide by, as to support and authenticate any act of your subscription now proposed. There is such a variety of denominations in that commission, that it may be applied to the people you see walking in the streets, as well as to us.

"When in reply I imputed that variety to the official style of such papers, Mr. Jay said it might be so, but they must not rest a question of that importance upon any such explanation; and since they were willing to accept of this in place of an express declaration of independence, the least they could expect was, that it should appear to be warranted by an explicit authority in that commission. I then asked, if instead of 'States' it would not do to say 'Provinces'; or 'States or Provinces.' Mr. Jay said neither of these would answer. I then begged the favor of him to give me in writing some sketch of the alteration he would have to be made in the commission. He readily did so in a minute, which is enclosed; to be more largely explained, if necessary, when the commission comes to be made out. He also said that this new commission must be under the great seal, as the other was.

"Doubting as to the propriety of giving such things in writing, I

MCIX

TO RICHARD OSWALD

Passy, 8 September, 1782.

Sir:—I have received the honor of yours, dated the 5th instant, enclosing an extract of a letter to

thought it was best to go out to Dr. Franklin's, carrying the instructions along with me, to see whether a reading of that article could not satisfy him. But after reading it, as he still expressed a desire of having a copy, I told him that although I had no order to that purpose, yet at any hazard whatsoever, since he desired it, I would not scruple to trust it in his hands. And I then sat down and wrote out a copy and signed it, which, after comparing it with the original, he laid by, saying very kindly that the only use he proposed to make of it was, that in case they took any liberties for the sake of removing difficulties not expressly specified in their instructions, he might have this paper in his hands to show in justification of their confidence, or some words to that purpose; for I cannot exactly quote them. The Doctor then desired I would tell Mr. Jay he wished to see him in the evening. He did go out again that night, and again this morning; no doubt with a view of agreeing upon an expedient for removing those obstacles to their proceeding, as hinted at in the Doctor's letter to me.

"At noon, and since writing the above, Mr. Jay called and told me that, upon further consultation and consideration of the matter, it was thought advisable not to press upon his Majesty's ministers those arguments which he proposed to make in the letter he intended to write to me (and which it was understood I might send home), as considering it somewhat more than indelicate for them to pretend to see more clearly than the king's ministers might do, the expediency, if not the necessity, at this critical time, of deciding with precision and despatch upon every measure that can be reasonably taken for extricating Great Britain out of her present embarrassing situation, in which her affairs must continue to be involved while there remains any hesitation in coming to an agreement with the States of America.

"There only remained for me to ask a single and final question of Mr. Jay, whether in his last conference with the Doctor (for he was just then come in from him) it was settled between them that upon my receiving from his Majesty a new commission under the great seal, such as the last, with an alteration only as before mentioned, of my being empowered to treat with them as commissioners of the Thirteen United States of America, naming the said States by their several provincial distinctions as usual; I said, whether in that case they would be

your Excellency, from the Right Honorable Thomas Townshend, one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, wherein your conduct in communicating to us the fourth article of your instructions appears to have been approved by his Majesty. I suppose,

satisfied to go on with the treaty, and without any other declaration of independence than as standing as an article in that treaty. Mr. Jay's answer was, that 'with this they would be satisfied, and that immediately upon such commission coming over, they would proceed in the treaty. And more than that,' he said, 'they would not be long about it; and perhaps would not be overhard upon us in the conditions.'"—*Paris, September 10th. MS. Letter.*

The "instruction" alluded to at the beginning of the above extracts from Mr. Oswald's letter, and also in Dr. Franklin's letter of September 8th, is as follows:

"*Article IV.*—In case you find the American commissioners are not at liberty to treat on any terms short of independence, you are to declare to them that you have authority to make that concession; our ardent wish for peace, disposing us to purchase it at the price of acceding to the complete independence of the Thirteen Colonies, namely, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Three Lower Counties on the Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia in North America."

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's approbation of your conduct in communicating to the American commissioners the fourth article of your instructions, which could not but convince them that the negotiation for peace and the cession of independence to the Thirteen United Colonies were intended to be carried on and concluded with the commissioners in Europe. Those gentlemen having expressed their satisfaction concerning that article, it is hoped they will not entertain a doubt of his Majesty's determination to exercise in the fullest extent the powers with which the act of Parliament has invested him, by granting to America full, complete, and unconditional independence, in the most explicit manner as an article of treaty."——*Whitehall, September 1st. MS. Letter.*

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"I received on Saturday last your packets of the 10th and 11th of this month.. A meeting of the king's confidential servants was held as soon as possible to consider the contents of them; and it was at once agreed to make the

therefore, that there is no impropriety in my requesting a copy of that instruction; and if you see none, I wish to receive it from you, hoping it may be of use in removing some of the difficulties that obstruct our proceeding. With great and sincere esteem, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.[1]

MCX

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES

PASSY, 8 September, 1782.

SIR:—Mr. Barclay, who will have the honor of delivering you this, will have that of laying before your Excellency his commission from the Congress of the United States of America, appointing him

alteration in the commission proposed to you by Mr. Jay. I trust that the readiness with which this proposal was accepted will be considered as an ample testimony of the openness and sincerity with which the government of this country is disposed to treat with the Americans."—*Whitehall, September 20th. MS. Letter.*

From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.—"When the privilege of fishing was asked by Dr. Franklin in August, drying the fish in Newfoundland was not mentioned particularly, and I did not think it proper to appear so attentive and tenacious of such like indulgences, as to ask any questions about it. And when lately demanded, although I objected, yet I did not insist for the same reason. And now, although Mr. Jay seems not positively to say that the privilege is indispensable, yet I own I wish much that it may not be considered in England as a matter of such consequence as to occasion a claim to exception; for, to tell the truth, when Dr. Franklin stated the privilege of fishing, I suspected drying was included, though not mentioned. Otherwise I should have wondered at his asking our leave for the Americans catching fish in the open seas, so near their own coasts, and wrote so in my letters at the time."—*Paris, October 11th. MS. Letter.*

[1] Mr. Hartley was also at this time in Paris.

their Consul-General in France. Mr. Barclay being about to enter on his consular functions, I request your Excellency would, in the usual manner, authenticate and make known his appointment, that in the exercise thereof he may meet with no molestation or impediment, but, on the contrary, receive that countenance and assistance he may stand in need of. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MCXI

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS, PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, LONDON

Passy, 9 September, 1782.

Dear Sir:—I have just received the very kind, friendly letter you were so good as to write to me by Dr. Broussonnet. Be assured, that I long earnestly for a return of those peaceful times, when I could sit down in sweet society with my English philosophical friends, communicating to each other new discoveries, and proposing improvements of old ones; all tending to extend the power of man over matter, avert or diminish the evils he is subject to, or augment the number of his enjoyments. Much more happy should I be thus employed in your most desirable company, than in that of all the grandees of the earth projecting plans of mischief, however necessary they may be supposed for obtaining greater good.

I am glad to learn by the Doctor that your great work goes on. I admire your magnanimity in the undertaking, and the perseverance with which you have prosecuted it.

I join with you most perfectly in the charming wish you so well express, "that such measures may be taken by both parties as may tend to the elevation of both, rather than the destruction of either." If any thing has happened endangering one of them, my comfort is, that I endeavored earnestly to prevent it, and gave honest, faithful advice, which, if it had been regarded, would have been effectual. And still, if proper means are used to produce, not only a peace, but what is much more interesting, a thorough reconciliation, a few years may heal the wounds that have been made in our happiness, and produce a degree of prosperity of which at present we can hardly form a conception. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MCXII

TO THE EARL OF GRANTHAM [1]

Passy, 11 September, 1782.

My Lord:—A long and severe indisposition has delayed my acknowledging the receipt of the letter

[1] This in reply to a letter from the Earl, dated July 26th, commending Mr. Fitzherbert, who was to succeed Mr. Grenville in Paris, to Franklin's acquaintance. Fitzherbert was afterward created Lord St. Helens.

your Lordship did me honor of writing to me by Mr. Fitzherbert.

You do me justice in believing that I agree with you in earnestly wishing the establishment of an honorable and lasting peace; and I am happy to be assured by your Lordship that it is the system of the ministers with whom you are co-operating. I know it to be the sincere desire of the United States; and, with such dispositions on both sides, there is reason to hope that the good work in its progress will meet with little difficulty. A small one has occurred in the commencement, with which Mr. Oswald will acquaint you. I flatter myself that means will be found on your part for removing it; and my best endeavors in removing the subsequent ones (if any should arise) may be relied on.

I had the honor of being known to your Lordship's father. On several occasions he manifested a regard for me, and a confidence in me. I shall be happy if my conduct in the present important business may procure me the same rank in the esteem of his worthy successor. I am, with sincere respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

MCXIII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 17 September, 1782.

My Dear Friend:—Since those acknowledged in my last, I have received your several favors of

August the 16th,[1] 20th, and 26th. I have been a long time afflicted with the gravel and gout, which have much indisposed me for writing. I am even now in pain, but will no longer delay some answer.

I did not perfectly comprehend the nature of your appointment respecting the refugees, and I supposed you would in a subsequent letter explain it. But, as I now find you have declined the service, such explanation is unnecessary.

I did receive the paper you inquire about, entitled *Preliminaries*, and dated May, 1782; but it was from you, and I know nothing of their having been communicated to this court. The third proposition—"that, in case the negotiation between Great Britain and the allies of America should not succeed, but the war continue between them, America should act and be treated as a neutral nation"—appeared at first sight inadmissible, being contrary to our treaty. The truce, too, seems not to have been desired by any of the parties. With unalterable esteem and affection, I am, my dear friend, ever yours, etc.,

B. Franklin.

MCXIV

INFORMATION TO THOSE WHO WOULD REMOVE TO AMERICA

Many persons in Europe having by letters, expressed to the writer of this, who is well acquainted

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 502.

with North America, their desire of transporting and establishing themselves in that country, but who appear to have formed, through ignorance, mistaken ideas and expectations of what is to be obtained there, he thinks it may be useful, and prevent inconvenient, expensive, and fruitless removals and voyages of improper persons, if he gives some clearer and truer notions of that part of the world than appear to have hitherto prevailed.

He finds it is imagined by numbers that the inhabitants of North America are rich, capable of rewarding, and disposed to reward, all sorts of ingenuity; that they are at the same time ignorant of all the sciences, and, consequently, that strangers possessing talents in the belles-lettres, fine arts, etc., must be highly esteemed, and so well paid as to become easily rich themselves; that there are also abundance of profitable offices to be disposed of, which the natives are not qualified to fill; and that, having few persons of family among them, strangers of birth must be greatly respected, and of course easily obtain the best of those offices, which will make all their fortunes; that the governments too, to encourage emigration from Europe, not only pay the expense of personal transportation, but give lands gratis to strangers, with negroes to work for them, utensils of husbandry, and stocks of cattle. These are all wild imaginations; and those who go to America with expectations founded upon them will surely find themselves disappointed.

The truth is, that though there are in that country few people so miserable as the poor of Europe, there

are also very few that in Europe would be called rich; it is rather a general happy mediocrity that prevails. There are few great proprietors of the soil, and few tenants; most people cultivate their own lands, or follow some handicraft or merchandise; very few rich enough to live idly upon their rents or incomes, or to pay the highest prices given in Europe for painting, statues, architecture, and the other works of art that are more curious than useful. Hence the natural geniuses that have arisen in America with such talents, have uniformly quitted that country for Europe, where they can be more suitably rewarded. It is true that letters and mathematical knowledge are in esteem there, but they are at the same time more common than is apprehended; there being already existing nine colleges or universities, viz., four in New England, and one in each of the provinces of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, all furnished with learned professors; besides a number of smaller academies. These educate many of their youth in the languages, and those sciences that qualify men for the professions of divinity, law, or physic. Strangers indeed are by no means excluded from exercising those professions; and the quick increase of inhabitants everywhere gives them a chance of employ, which they have in common with the natives. Of civil offices, or employments, there are few; no superfluous ones, as in Europe; and it is a rule established in some of the States, that no office should be so profitable as to make it desirable. The thirty-sixth article of the Constitution of Pennsyl-

vania runs expressly in these words: "As every freeman, to preserve his independence (if he has not a sufficient estate), ought to have some profession, calling, trade, or farm, whereby he may honestly subsist, there can be no necessity for, nor use in, establishing offices of profit, the usual effects of which are dependence and servility unbecoming free-men, in the possessors and expectants; faction, contention, corruption, and disorder among the people. Wherefore, whenever an office, through increase of fees or otherwise, becomes so profitable, as to occasion many to apply for it, the profits ought to be lessened by the Legislature."

These ideas prevailing more or less in all the United States, it cannot be worth any man's while, who has a means of living at home, to expatriate himself, in hopes of obtaining a profitable civil office in America; and, as to military offices, they are at an end with the war, the armies being disbanded. Much less is it advisable for a person to go thither who has no other quality to recommend him but his birth. In Europe it has indeed its value; but it is a commodity that cannot be carried to a worse market than that of America, where people do not inquire concerning a stranger, *What is he?* but, *What can he do?* If he has any useful art, he is welcome; and if he exercises it, and behaves well, he will be respected by all that know him; but a mere man of quality, who, on that account wants to live upon the public, by some office or salary, will be despised and disregarded. The husbandman is in honor there, and even the mechanic, because their employments

are useful. The people have a saying, that God Almighty is himself a mechanic, the greatest in the universe; and he is respected and admired more for the variety, ingenuity, and utility of his handiworks, than for the antiquity of his family. They are pleased with the observation of a negro, and frequently mention it, that *Boccarora* (meaning the white man) *make de black man workee, make de horse workee, make de ox workee, make ebery ting workee; only de hog. He, de hog, no workee; he eat, he drink, he walk about, he go to sleep when he please, he live like a gempleman.* According to these opinions of the Americans, one of them would think himself more obliged to a genealogist, who could prove for him that his ancestors and relations for ten generations had been ploughmen, smiths, carpenters, turners, weavers, tanners, or even shoemakers, and consequently that they were useful members of society, than if he could only prove that they were gentlemen, doing nothing of value, but living idly on the labor of others, mere *fruges consumere nati*,[1] and otherwise *good for nothing*, till by their death their estates, like the carcass of the negro's gentleman-hog, come to be *cut up*.

With regard to encouragements for strangers from government, they are really only what are derived from good laws and liberty. Strangers are welcome, because there is room enough for them all, and therefore the old inhabitants are not jealous of them; the laws protect them sufficiently, so that

[1] " . . . . . born
Merely to eat up the corn."—WATTS.

they have no need of the patronage of great men; and every one will enjoy securely the profits of his industry. But, if he does not bring a fortune with him, he must work and be industrious to live. One or two years' residence gives him all the rights of a citizen; but the government does not, at present, whatever it may have done in former times, hire people to become settlers, by paying their passages, giving land, negroes, utensils, stock, or any other kind of emolument whatsoever. In short, America is the land of labor, and by no means what the English call *Lubberland*, and the French *Pays de Cocagne*, where the streets are said to be paved with half-peck loaves, the houses tiled with pancakes, and where the fowls fly about ready roasted, crying, *Come eat me!*

Who then are the kind of persons to whom an emigration to America may be advantageous? And what are the advantages they may reasonably expect?

Land being cheap in that country, from the vast forests still void of inhabitants, and not likely to be occupied in an age to come, insomuch that the propriety of a hundred acres of fertile soil full of wood may be obtained near the frontiers, in many places, for eight or ten guineas, hearty young laboring men, who understand the husbandry of corn and cattle, which is nearly the same in that country as in Europe, may easily establish themselves there. A little money saved of the good wages they receive there, while they work for others, enables them to buy the land and begin their plantation, in which they

are assisted by the good-will of their neighbors, and some credit. Multitudes of poor people from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Germany, have, by this means, in a few years become wealthy farmers, who, in their own countries, where all the lands are fully occupied, and the wages of labor low, could never have emerged from the poor condition wherein they were born.

From the salubrity of the air, the healthiness of the climate, the plenty of good provisions, and the encouragement to early marriages by the certainty of subsistence in cultivating the earth, the increase of inhabitants by natural generation is very rapid in America, and becomes still more so by the accession of strangers; hence there is a continual demand for more artisans of all the necessary and useful kinds, to supply those cultivators of the earth with houses, and with furniture and utensils of the grosser sorts, which cannot so well be brought from Europe. Tolerably good workmen in any of those mechanic arts are sure to find employ, and to be well paid for their work, there being no restraints preventing strangers from exercising any art they understand, nor any permission necessary. If they are poor, they begin first as servants or journeymen; and if they are sober, industrious, and frugal, they soon become masters, establish themselves in business, marry, raise families, and become respectable citizens.

Also, persons of moderate fortunes and capitals, who, having a number of children to provide for, are desirous of bringing them up to industry, and to secure estates for their posterity, have opportunities

of doing it in America, which Europe does not afford. There they may be taught and practise profitable mechanic arts, without incurring disgrace on that account, but, on the contrary, acquiring respect by such abilities. There small capitals laid out in lands, which daily become more valuable by the increase of people, afford a solid prospect of ample fortunes thereafter for those children. The writer of this has known several instances of large tracts of land, bought, on what was then the frontier of Pennsylvania, for ten pounds per hundred acres, which, when the settlements had been extended far beyond them, sold readily, without any improvement made upon them, for three pounds per acre. The acre in America is the same with the English acre, or the acre of Normandy.

Those who desire to understand the state of government in America, would do well to read the Constitutions of the several States, and the Articles of Confederation that bind the whole together for general purposes, under the direction of one assembly, called the Congress. These Constitutions have been printed, by order of Congress, in America; two editions of them have also been printed in London; and a good translation of them into French has lately been published at Paris.

Several of the princes of Europe, of late, from an opinion of advantage to arise by producing all commodities and manufactures within their own dominions, so as to diminish or render useless their importations, have endeavored to entice workmen from other countries by high salaries, privileges, etc.

Many persons, pretending to be skilled in various great manufactures, imagining that America must be in want of them, and that the Congress would probably be disposed to imitate the princes above mentioned, have proposed to go over, on condition of having their passages paid, lands given, salaries appointed, exclusive privileges for terms of years, etc. Such persons, on reading the Articles of Confederation, will find that the Congress have no power committed to them, nor money put into their hands, for such purposes; and that, if any such encouragement is given, it must be by the government of some separate State. This, however, has rarely been done in America; and, when it has been done, it has rarely succeeded, so as to establish a manufacture, which the country was not yet so ripe for as to encourage private persons to set it up; labor being generally too dear there, and hands difficult to be kept together, every one desiring to be a master, and the cheapness of lands inclining many to leave trades for agriculture. Some, indeed, have met with success, and are carried on to advantage; but they are generally such as require only a few hands, or wherein great part of the work is performed by machines. Goods that are bulky, and of so small value as not well to bear the expense of freight, may often be made cheaper in the country than they can be imported; and the manufacture of such goods will be profitable wherever there is a sufficient demand. The farmers in America produce, indeed, a good deal of wool and flax; and none is exported, it is all worked up; but it is in the way of domestic

manufacture, for the use of the family. The buying up quantities of wool and flax, with the design to employ spinners, weavers, etc., and form great establishments, producing quantities of linen and woollen goods for sale, has been several times attempted in different provinces; but those projects have generally failed, goods of equal value being imported cheaper. And when the governments have been solicited to support such schemes by encouragements in money, or by imposing duties on importation of such goods, it has been generally refused, on this principle, that, if the country is ripe for the manufacture, it may be carried on by private persons to advantage; and if not, it is a folly to think of forcing nature. Great establishments of manufacture require great numbers of poor to do the work for small wages; those poor are to be found in Europe, but will not be found in America till the lands are all taken up and cultivated, and the excess of people, who cannot get land, want employment. The manufacture of silk, they say, is natural in France, as that of cloth in England, because each country produces in plenty the first material; but if England will have a manufacture of silk as well as that of cloth, and France of cloth as well as that of silk, these unnatural operations must be supported by mutual prohibitions, or high duties on the importation of each other's goods; by which means the workmen are enabled to tax the home consumer by greater prices, while the higher wages they receive makes them neither happier nor richer, since they only drink more and work less. Therefore, the governments in

America do nothing to encourage such projects. The people, by this means, are not imposed on, either by the merchant or the mechanic. If the merchant demands too much profit on imported shoes, they buy of the shoemaker; and if he asks too high a price, they take them of the merchant; thus the two professions are checks on each other. The shoemaker, however, has, on the whole, a considerable profit upon his labor in America, beyond what he had in Europe, as he can add to his price a sum nearly equal to all the expenses of freight and commission, risk or insurance, etc., necessarily charged by the merchant. And the case is the same with the workmen in every other mechanic art. Hence it is that artisans generally live better and more easily in America than in Europe; and such as are good economists make a comfortable provision for age, and for their children. Such may, therefore, remove with advantage to America.

In the long-settled countries of Europe, all arts, trades, professions, farms, etc., are so full, that it is difficult for a poor man, who has children, to place them where they may gain, or learn to gain, a decent livelihood. The artisans, who fear creating future rivals in business, refuse to take apprentices, but upon conditions of money, maintenance, or the like, which the parents are unable to comply with. Hence the youth are dragged up in ignorance of every gainful art, and obliged to become soldiers, or servants, or thieves, for a subsistence. In America, the rapid increase of inhabitants takes away that fear of rivalship, and artisans willingly receive apprentices

from the hope of profit by their labor, during the remainder of the time stipulated, after they shall be instructed. Hence it is easy for poor families to get their children instructed; for the artisans are so desirous of apprentices, that many of them will even give money to the parents, to have boys from ten to fifteen years of age bound apprentices to them till the age of twenty-one; and many poor parents have, by that means, on their arrival in the country, raised money enough to buy land sufficient to establish themselves, and to subsist the rest of their family by agriculture. These contracts for apprentices are made before a magistrate, who regulates the agreement according to reason and justice, and, having in view the formation of a future and useful citizen, obliges the master to engage by a written indenture, not only that, during the time of service stipulated, the apprentice shall be duly provided with meat, drink, apparel, washing, and lodging, and, at its expiration, with a complete new suit of clothes, but also that he shall be taught to read, write, and cast accounts; and that he shall be well instructed in the art or profession of his master, or some other, by which he may afterwards gain a livelihood, and be able in his turn to raise a family. A copy of this indenture is given to the apprentice or his friends, and the magistrate keeps a record of it, to which recourse may be had, in case of failure by the master in any point of performance. This desire among the masters, to have more hands employed in working for them, induces them to pay the passages of young persons, of both sexes, who, on their arrival, agree

to serve them one, two, three, or four years; those who have already learned a trade agreeing for a shorter term, in proportion to their skill and the consequent immediate value of their service; and those who have none agreeing for a longer term, in consideration of being taught an art their poverty would not permit them to acquire in their own country.

The almost general mediocrity of fortune that prevails in America obliging its people to follow some business for subsistence, those vices that arise usually from idleness are in a great measure prevented. Industry and constant employment are great preservatives of the morals and virtue of a nation. Hence bad examples to youth are more rare in America, which must be a comfortable consideration to parents. To this may be truly added, that serious religion, under its various denominations, is not only tolerated, but respected and practised. Atheism is unknown there; infidelity rare and secret; so that persons may live to a great age in that country, without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel. And the Divine Being seems to have manifested his approbation of the mutual forbearance and kindness with which the different sects treat each other, by the remarkable prosperity with which He has been pleased to favor the whole country.

END OF VOLUME IX